Britain's biggest-selling food magazine

good FOOD

EST 1989

February 2025

sticky & sweet

our recipes gF always work

Banana, date & pecan skillet pud

Easiest ever one-pan meals

- Peanut butter squash curry
- Pork, fennel & ricotta lasagne
- Caramelised coconut rice pudding

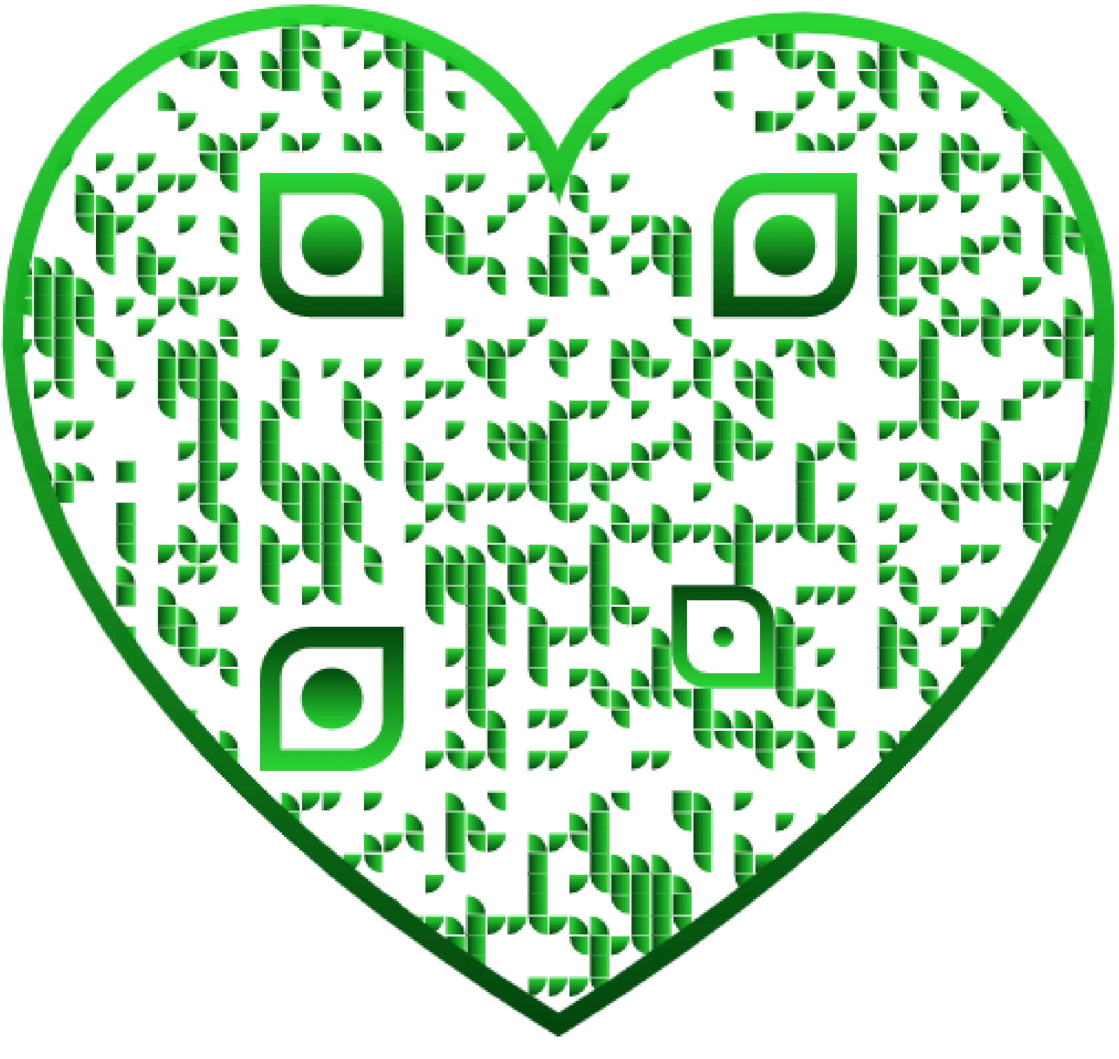
Valentine's steak with cacio e pepe butter

Ramadan celebration menu

Cook with Georgia – our Good Food Rising Star

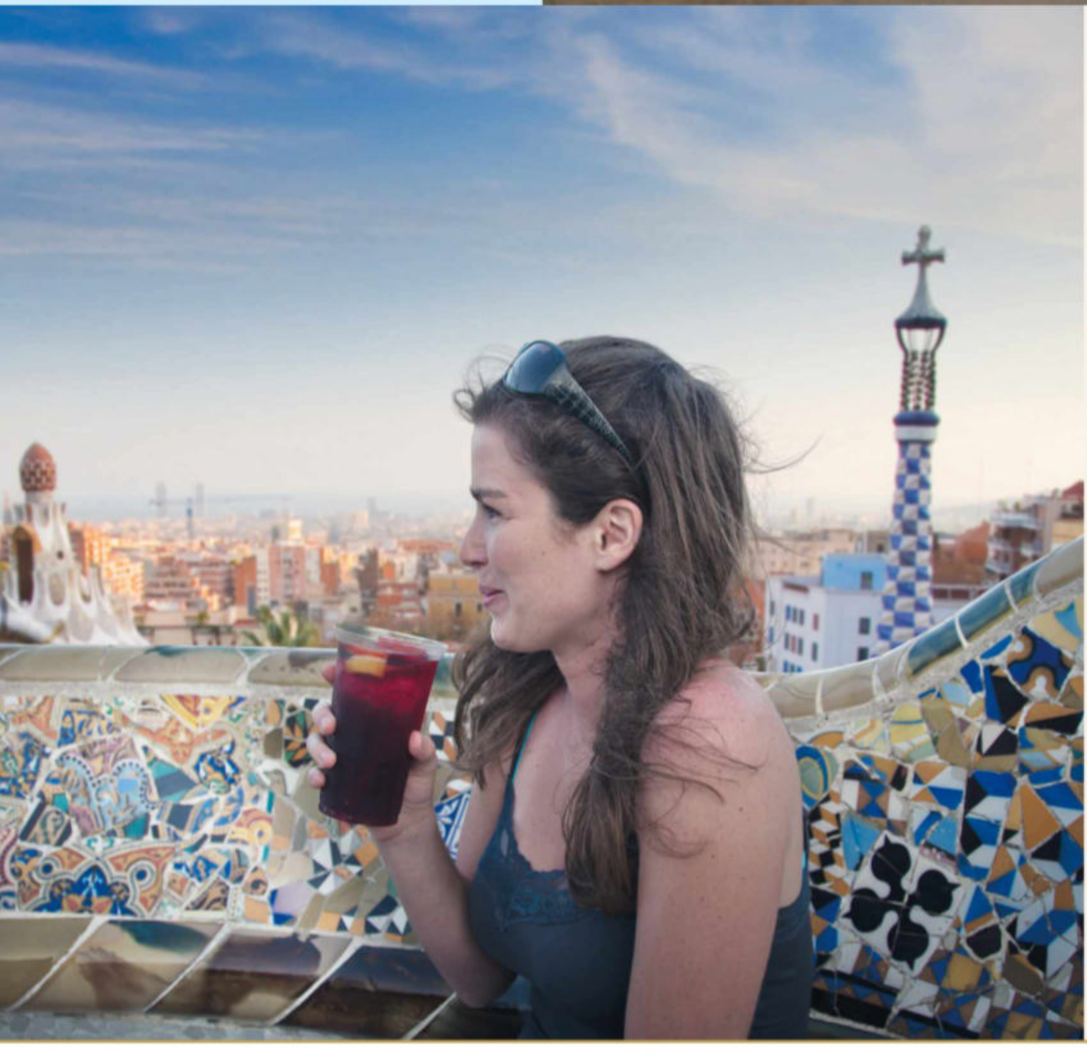
£6.75

Foodie sunshine getaways | 6-ingredient slow cooker specials



French Champagne today.
Spanish sangria tomorrow.

HOLIDAY LIKE NEVER BEFORE



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ABTA
Travel with confidence

Welcome to February

It's that time of year when I'm dreaming of getting away for a sunshine holiday. I'm not alone, right? It's why we're starting our new series of travel-focused guides (p130) to give us all something to look forward to. What better place to start than with the Florida Keys? Our guide to the best places to eat, drink and stay is sure to have you opening up your laptop and booking the first flight to the Sunshine State. But for now, I'm going to embrace the chilly evenings, and warm up with some thrifty comfort food (p13) – my post-Christmas bank balance will thank me for it. This issue also reveals the winner of our new Rising Stars competition (below and p8), which scoured the nation for the brightest up-and-coming cooking talent. Georgia Hughes blew away our judges Max La Manna and Good Food's Cassie Best with her creative use of a basic vegetable in her standout final dish. Be sure to give it a try, and watch out for the runners-up in coming months.

Keith

Keith Kendrick,
Group magazines editor
@keithk_goodfood

EXCLUSIVE! *MASTERCHEF* WINNER BRIN ON THE GOOD FOOD APP

Former vet Brin Pirathapan soared to victory in 2024's *MasterChef* competition with his Sri Lankan-inspired flavours combined with his culinary intricacy. His new recipe for rich, whole-roasted duck a l'orange is available exclusively on our app.

3 of my faves from this month's issue

HONEY & SRIRACHA CHICKEN

This six-ingredient dish from Nathan Anthony (Bored of Lunch) is sensational slow cooker simplicity (p52).

JAMAICA GINGER CAKE

April Jackson's recipe reminds me of my late mum. Ginger cake was a treat slathered with butter (p90).

RIB-EYE STEAK

As my wife will testify, it's Valentine's Day every day in our home! I'll be making Barney's extra-special rib-eye that evening (p86).

COOK THE COVER (p14)

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RECIPE
Cassie Best

PHOTOGRAPH
James Lee

FOOD STYLIST
Amy Kinnear

PROP STYLIST
Jo Harris

SHOOT DIRECTORS
Ben Curtis & Rachel Bayly

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Friends of Good Food

MALLIKA BASU

Have you heard of bean hesitancy? Mallika brilliantly explains why you should overcome it and eat more beans to combat climate change (p124).

GEORGIA HUGHES

Recipe developer Georgia is the winner of our first ever Rising Stars competition. Try her champion dishes (p8).

SOHA DARWISH

Egyptian-British with Syrian heritage, Soha shares cherished recipes for a Ramadan celebration. They're easy to make with big flavours from the Middle East (p34).

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good FOOD Rising Stars

Meet the winner of our competition, **p8**

OUR AWARDS

Britain's number one food media brand

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Editor of the Year (Food and Drink) Keith Kendrick, Good Food	**Campaign of the Year:** Good Food app takeover by Nadiya Hussain	**Editorial Team of the Year: Consumer** Good Food and olive	**Best Online Brand: Consumer** Good Food	**The Readly Award** Good Food *What's Your Perfect Comfort Food?* (October 2022)	**Best Food & Drink Podcast** Good Food Podcast	**Media Brand of the Year (Consumer Media)** Good Food	**Editor of the Year (Consumer Media)** Lily Barclay *goodfood.com* and *olivemagazine.com*	**Writer of the Year** Melissa Thompson, Good Food	**Editor of the Year, Food & Drink** Lily Barclay	**Media Brand of the Year** Good Food

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- Cruise the Dutch waterways and explore Amsterdam and Rotterdam **p135**

Why you can trust goodFOOD

Good Food is the UK's No.1 food lifestyle media brand. We are passionate about food and cooking. While recipes are at the heart of what we do, we are committed to helping you have the best food experience you can, whether you're shopping for food, in your kitchen or eating out in the UK or abroad. This is what we promise:

Biggest and best
We're proud to be Britain's biggest-selling food magazine and the UK's No.1 food website, *goodfood.com*. Our contributors – chefs, our in-house team and confident columnists – are experts in their fields. Join the conversation in our twice weekly podcasts. Our best-selling cookbooks feature our trusted recipes.

Recipes for everyone
We always include quick, easy dishes, ideas for relaxed entertaining and more challenging recipes for when you want to take your skills up a notch.

Tested and trusted
All our recipes are thoroughly tested by experts to ensure they'll work for you. We put our gadgets through a rigorous testing process and carry out our taste tests fairly. Our restaurant and travel recommendations have all been tried by one of us.

Ethical
We care about the food we eat, the people who produce it and the effect this has on the world. In our test kitchen, we use humanely reared British meats, high-welfare chicken and eggs, and sustainable fish whenever possible. We aim to help you avoid food waste, with advice on using leftovers.

Healthy eating
Every recipe is analysed by our BANT-registered nutritionist, so you can be informed when you choose what to eat. We flag up vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free recipes. Find out more about our health philosophy on page 137.

Families and children
Families can need help to create harmonious mealtimes, so we address this by flagging up 'family' recipes. We encourage children and teenagers to get cooking with recipes that help them to learn new skills. Find out more at *goodfood.com/family-kids*.

Eating like a local
One of the joys of travel – both in the UK and overseas – is discovering great food. Our features are written from an insider perspective by on-the-ground writers and food and travel journalists.

Independent and respected
We are impartial and independent, so you can trust our advice and recommendations on everything from restaurants and wine to kitchen gadgets and more. We encourage your input on your local finds, and appreciate your feedback on our recommendations.

Food is our passion and pleasure
We take food seriously, but we also believe it's a pleasure to be enjoyed, whether cooking for the family, trying an unfamiliar ingredient, buying new products or eating out. We share our food discoveries and adventures with you – and love you to share the same with us on social media using *#goodfood*.

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Our commitment

At Immediate Media, publishers of Good Food, we respect and value differences. We understand that when people from different backgrounds and with different points of view work together, we can create the most value for our readers, our people and society. We always strive to be inclusive, but we need to do better. We have been taking time to listen and understand how we can make positive changes, and how we can better support and increase diversity across all our brands. We continue to work on a comprehensive plan to create and drive authentic change.

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gF INSTANT RECIPE FINDER

69 recipes

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● Vegan

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Britain's best new cooking talent

In our first ever talent search, we scoured the nation for the cookery stars of the future. So, drum roll… meet our winner **Georgia Hughes**

In autumn 2024, we launched the very first Good Food Rising Stars competition, looking for talented food content creators. We asked applicants for a cherished recipe along with a one-minute video to demonstrate and explain the story behind it. The prize? A money-can't-buy opportunity to use the Good Food brand as a springboard into a new career with camera and kitchen kit thrown in.

After shortlisting a strong list of candidates, we invited eight finalists to Sauce at The Langham in London to compete in the deciding cook-off. Our head of food Cassie Best and chef Max La Manna critiqued a vegan midweek meal cooked against the clock to decide on the final five ahead of picking the overall winner, Georgia Hughes.

Watch the journey in our Good Food Rising Stars YouTube series and learn more about Georgia and our other shortlisted candidates: Sofia Antona, Farzanah Nasser, Archie Herbert and Olive Ezike. We'll also be showcasing their recipes across the next four issues.

Above: The finalists cook for judges Cassie Best and Max La Manna at The Langham. Left: Finalists (left to right): Sofia Antona, Olivia Howard, Farzannah Nasser, Bonia Leung, Olive Ezike, Archie Herbert, Georgia Hughes and Tabia Riek with the judges.

Meet the winner
Georgia Hughes

Georgia particularly impressed the judges with her creative use of a basic vegetable in her standout final dish – curried butter beans with onions, three ways (see recipe, p10). Her presented plate was practically licked clean. Her entry recipe – crispy pork massaman ramen (p10) – also had major appeal to the shortlisting panel, who praised its inventive flavours, comforting cookability and picture-perfect finish.

During the competition, she demonstrated a passion for accessible, flavourful cooking, plus she showed off well-layered dishes and colourful, appetising presentation.

Georgia says: "Taking part in the Good Food Rising Stars competition was an incredible experience. I loved getting creative with the brief as it pushed me to think beyond the regular recipes I usually make. One of the best parts was meeting the other talented finalists who share a similar passion for food. It was amazing to connect with them and share experiences.

As someone who usually shares recipes on social media, it's rare to receive truly honest feedback on my dishes. That's why getting feedback from Max and Cassie was such a highlight for me. I entered the competition hoping to make it to the final, so I was so excited – and a little shocked – to come away with a win! Knowing my recipes will be published with Good Food feels surreal. It's such an incredible opportunity, and I'm so grateful to have been a part of it."

Turn the page for Georgia's recipes >

good FOOD Rising Stars
2024

Georgia is a freelance recipe developer after making the switch from marketing. Over the past two years, she has collaborated with a range of brands, including HexClad and Aldi, bringing her recipes to wider audiences. Beyond her brand partnerships, Georgia shares her recipes and cooking tips on her Instagram page, where she engages a growing community of food lovers. *@bigdishenergyy*

Next month, meet the first of our Good Food Rising Stars runners-up

Curried butter beans with onions, three ways

Transform humble butter beans into a rich, aromatic dish with onions prepared three ways, plus creamy coconut yogurt and roasted broccoli.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY** **V**

- 2 red onions, thinly sliced
- 2 limes, 1½ juiced, ½ cut into wedges
- 5 tbsp olive oil, plus extra to serve
- 200g long-stemmed broccoli
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 5cm piece of ginger, peeled and grated
- 2 heaped tsp medium curry powder
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1½ tbsp peanut butter
- 570g jar of butter beans
- 5 tbsp plant-based coconut yogurt

1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Put a quarter of the onions in a non-metallic jar with most of the lime juice and a large pinch of salt, then set aside to pickle. Heat 2 tbsp of the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat and cook the remaining onions with a pinch of salt for 15-17 mins until golden brown and lightly caramelised.

2 Meanwhile, massage 1 tbsp oil into the broccoli along with some seasoning, then tip onto a baking tray. Roast for 10-12 mins until golden brown and tender.

3 Heat the remaining 2 tbsp oil in a second frying pan over a medium-high heat and scrape in a third of the caramelised onions. Fry for 5 mins until crisp, then transfer to a plate lined with kitchen paper and sprinkle over some salt.

4 Add the garlic and ginger to the larger pan of caramelised onions, and cook for 2-3 mins more until fragrant. Stir in the curry powder, soy sauce, peanut butter and the remaining lime juice. Cook for 2-3 mins until bubbling and reduced slightly, then tip in the butter beans, half the liquid from the jar and 2 tbsp of the coconut yogurt. Stir to combine. If the sauce is a little thick, add a splash of water to loosen, then continue to cook for 2 mins.

5 To serve, top the butter beans with a dollop of yogurt each, the broccoli, crispy onions and pickled onions, with lime wedges on the side for squeezing over.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • iron • folate • vit c • fibre • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 759 kcals • fat 47g • saturates 16g • carbs 49g • sugars 17g • fibre 22g • protein 23g • salt 2.9g

Crispy pork massaman ramen

Cook a quick and easy ramen with fragrant coconut and spiced pork. It takes just over half an hour – ideal for a flavour-packed midweek meal.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY**

- 150g dried ramen noodles
- 5 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 spring onions, finely sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced
- 4 tbsp soy sauce
- 1-2 tbsp massaman curry paste
- 400ml can coconut milk
- 300g pork mince
- 2 tsp Chinese five-spice powder
- chilli oil and lime wedges, to serve

1 Cook the noodles following pack instructions, then drain well and rinse with cold water to prevent them from sticking. Divide the noodles between two bowls.

2 Drizzle 2 tbsp sesame oil into a saucepan over a medium heat. Mix in half of the spring onions and all the garlic. After 2-3 mins, add the red pepper and cook for an additional 5 mins. Once the veg has softened slightly, add 2 tbsp soy sauce and the massaman paste (start with 1 tbsp and adjust to taste). Cook for 2 mins, then pour in the coconut milk and simmer for 10 mins.

3 Meanwhile, heat the remaining oil in a non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat and add the pork mince. Break the mince up to ensure even browning and after 3-4 mins, once most of the liquid has evaporated, stir in the five-spice powder and remaining soy sauce. Fry for 8-10 mins until it begins to brown and go slightly crispy.

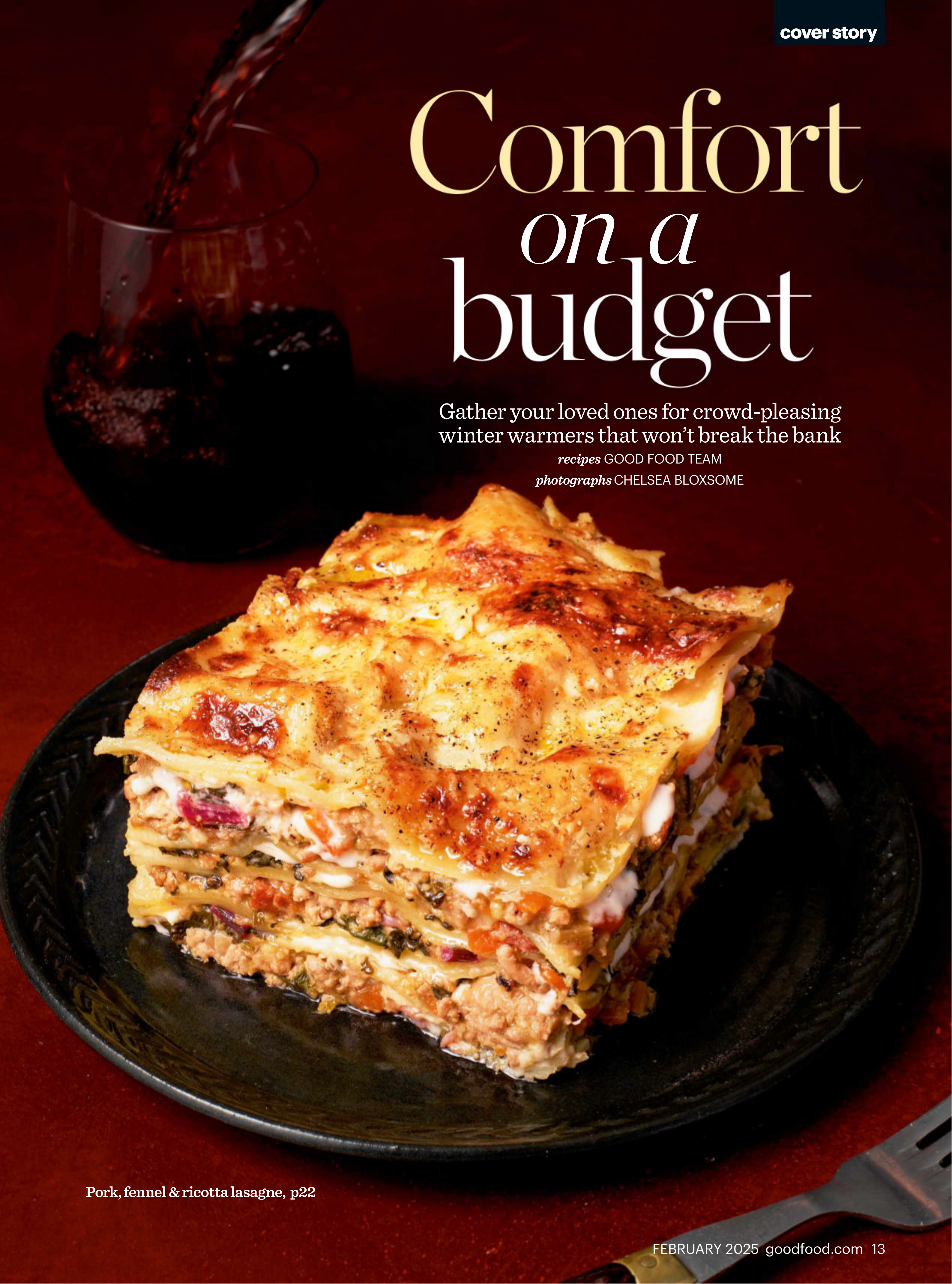
4 Add a generous ladle of the ramen broth to the noodle bowls and top with the crispy pork and remaining spring onions. Serve with chilli oil and lime wedges to squeeze over.

PER SERVING 919 kcals • fat 54g • saturates 23g • carbs 64g • sugars 7g • fibre 5g • protein 42g • salt 3.19g

Recipe photographs TOM REGESTER | Shoot director FREDDIE STEWART | Food stylist TROY WILLIS | Stylist FAYE WEARS
Event photographs MARVELLOUS LAST NIGHT

PAXO
A Roast isn't a Roast without
The Nation's Favourite* Stuffing!
PAXO
Sage & Onion

Source: Circana Vales Sales
Total Market 52we 26th October 2024



Comfort *on a* budget

Gather your loved ones for crowd-pleasing winter warmers that won't break the bank

recipes GOOD FOOD TEAM

photographs CHELSEA BLOXSOME

Pork, fennel & ricotta lasagne, p22

Sticky banana, date & pecan skillet pudding

Use overripe bananas (skin and all!) in this indulgent no-waste pud. ***Cassie Best***

SERVES 6 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 55 mins **EASY** **V**

- 100g stoned dates, chopped
- 150ml whole milk
- 200g butter, softened
- 150g dark soft brown sugar
- 2 very ripe bananas, unpeeled
- 3 medium eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 200g self-raising flour
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 100g pecans, chopped
- vanilla ice cream, to serve

For the sauce

- 100g dark brown soft sugar
- 100ml double cream
- 25g butter

1 Put the chopped dates and milk in a saucepan and warm over a low-medium heat until the milk is steaming. Cook for a few more minutes until the dates are soft, then remove from the heat and leave to cool a little.

2 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Tip the butter, sugar, whole bananas (including the skin), eggs, vanilla, flour, bicarb, and the date and milk mixture into a blender. Add 1/2 tsp salt and blend to a smooth cake batter. Pour the batter into a skillet pan (a deep ovenproof frying pan) and scatter over half the chopped pecans, then stir them into the batter. Bake for 45 mins until golden brown and cooked through.

3 While the pudding is baking, bubble the ingredients for the sauce in a small pan over a low heat until combined to a glossy toffee sauce, about 5 mins. Stir in a pinch of salt.

4 When the pudding is cooked, pour over half the sauce and scatter with the remaining pecans, then return to the oven for 5 mins until the toffee sauce is bubbling. Serve with the remaining sauce and scoops of vanilla ice cream.

PER SERVING 892 kcals • fat 55g • saturates 27g • carbs 85g • sugars 59g • fibre 4g • protein 11g • salt 1.78

make our gF cover recipe

Curried bean stew with coconut & coriander drizzle

This hearty stew makes the most of a pantry staple – butter beans. They're filling, packed with protein and low-cost, too. ***Helena Busiakiewicz***

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY V**

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil, plus a drizzle
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 tsp black or brown mustard seeds
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 1 tbsp medium curry powder
- 2 garlic cloves, grated
- 15g ginger, grated
- 700ml coconut milk
- 2 x 400g cans butter beans, drained
- 200g curly kale, leaves torn
- 20g coriander, roughly chopped
- 1 green chilli, roughly chopped (optional)
- 1 lime, zested and juiced

1 Put a large, deep, saucepan with a lid over a medium heat. Once hot, pour in the oil. Scatter in the onion and cook for 8-10 mins to soften. Tip in the mustard seeds, coriander seeds, curry powder, garlic and ginger, and cook for 2-3 mins until fragrant and the seeds are beginning to sizzle and pop.

2 Pour in 600ml coconut milk and bring to the boil. Reduce to a simmer, then tip in the beans. Let it bubble for 10 mins, stirring occasionally.

3 Heat the oven to 180C/160C/gas 4. Drizzle half of the kale with oil and season well with salt. Spread over a baking tray and bake for 8-10 mins until darkened and crisp.

4 Meanwhile, put the coriander, remaining coconut milk, green chilli, half of the lime juice and a good pinch of salt in the bowl of a small food processor, or in a deep bowl if using a hand blender. Blitz to a drizzlable consistency, then set aside.

5 Stir the remaining kale leaves into the butter beans, put a lid on and cook for 5 mins. Once they're tender, stir in the remaining lime juice. Divide between four bowls, top with the crispy kale, then drizzle with the coriander chutney and a sprinkling of lime zest.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • fibre • vit c • iron • 2 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 553 kcals • fat 42g • saturates 30g • carbs 26g • sugars 8g • fibre 12g • protein 13g • salt 0.09g

Peanut butter squash curry

Here's an easy vegan curry with all the flavour of satay sauce.
Barney Desmazery

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 50 mins **EASY** **V** ❄

- 6 garlic cloves
- 3 lemongrass stalks, bashed and roughly chopped
- thumb-sized piece of ginger, peeled and chopped
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp ground coriander
- 1 tbsp ground turmeric
- 2 red chillies, 1 roughly chopped and 1 sliced to serve (optional)
- 1 small onion, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and cut into chunks
- 1 tbsp light brown soft sugar
- 100g smooth peanut butter
- 3 tbsp soy sauce
- 440ml can coconut milk
- 250ml vegetable stock
- 1 lime, juiced

To serve

- coriander, chopped
- peanuts, roughly chopped (optional)
- cooked rice

1 Blitz the garlic, lemongrass, ginger, spices, chillies, onion and a large splash of water in a food processor with a pinch of salt until you have a smooth paste.

2 Heat the oil in a pan and cook the paste for 8-10 mins until it splits. Stir through the squash to coat in the paste, then stir through the sugar, peanut butter and soy sauce and cook until combined.

3 Pour in the coconut milk and stock, bring to a simmer, season and continue to simmer for 30-35 mins or until the squash is tender (keep on checking it as it depends on the squash – some take 15 mins and others 45 mins) stirring often. Turn off the heat, add the lime juice, then scatter over the fresh coriander, sliced chilli and peanuts, if you like, and serve with rice.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • fibre • vit c • 1 of 5-a-day • gluten free

PER SERVING 461 kcals • fat 33g • saturates 19g • carbs 26g • sugars 17g • fibre 7g • protein 11g • salt 1.95g

Toasted coconut rice pudding with cardamom poached rhubarb

Make the most of pretty pink forced rhubarb whilst it's in season by roasting it to intensify it's bright colour and flavour. ***Cassie Best***

SERVES 4-6 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 50 mins **EASY** **V**

- 25g butter
- 175g pudding rice
- 100g golden caster sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract, bean paste or 1 vanilla pod, split and seeds scraped out
- 800ml coconut milk
- 100ml double cream
- grating of nutmeg

For the rhubarb

- 400g rhubarb, cut into 3cm batons
- 100g caster sugar
- 10 cardamom pods
- 2 strips orange zest

1 Heat the oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3. Melt the butter in a large ovenproof pan. When it's foaming, add the rice and cook for a few minutes until the butter turns golden brown and the rice is lightly toasted.

2 Stir in the sugar for a few minutes until it dissolves, then add the vanilla, coconut milk, double cream and a pinch of salt. Grate a fine layer of fresh nutmeg over the top, then put the dish in the oven to cook for 45 mins, until the rice is cooked through and a skin has formed.

3 While the rice pudding cooks, toss the rhubarb, sugar and cardamom together in a baking tray. Tuck the orange zest in with the rhubarb. Roast the rhubarb alongside the rice pudding for the last 20 mins.

4 Serve the rice pudding in bowls with the rhubarb and syrup spooned over the top.

GOOD TO KNOW gluten free
PER SERVING (6) 594 kcals • fat 35g • saturates 27g • carbs 63g • sugars 37g • fibre 2g • protein 4g • salt 0.10g

tip

Vanilla sugar

Vanilla pods are an expensive ingredient, so make sure you get the most from them. Once you've roasted the pod alongside the rhubarb, dab it dry on some kitchen paper, then blitz the whole pod with 250g sugar to make a vanilla sugar to use in cakes or sprinkle over desserts. It will keep in a jar indefinitely.

Pork, fennel & ricotta lasagne

This lasagne swaps out the usual beef ragu for a cheaper pork one, cooked until meltingly tender and layered up with a creamy ricotta béchamel. The number of portions it makes means it's a cheap way to serve cosy comfort food to your friends and family, or you can freeze it for a stress-free weeknight dinner. ***Ailsa Burt***

SERVES 10-12 **PREP** 40 mins
COOK 4 hrs 30 mins
MORE EFFORT ❄

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 100g pancetta, diced
- 1kg pork mince
- 500g onions, finely sliced
- 2 celery sticks, finely chopped
- 3 medium-sized carrots, finely chopped
- 1 fennel bulb, around 275g, finely chopped
- 6 garlic cloves, crushed
- 5 rosemary sprigs
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 tsp fennel seeds (optional)
- 2 tsp caster sugar
- 200ml dry white wine
- 1 litre chicken stock
- 400ml whole milk
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 300g swiss chard, stalks finely sliced and leaves roughly chopped
- 500g dried lasagne sheets

For the béchamel

- 85g butter
- 85g plain flour
- 1 litre whole milk
- ½ whole nutmeg
- 250g ricotta
- 100g parmesan, grated

1 Add 1 tbsp of the oil to a large, deep flameproof casserole dish, or a deep saucepan. Stir in the pancetta and brown over a medium-high heat for 5-6 mins until golden, then transfer to a bowl using a slotted spoon. Add the mince to the pan in batches. Brown all over, around 8 mins, then transfer to the same bowl as the pancetta. Pour in the remaining oil and stir in the onions, celery, carrots and fennel along with a pinch of salt. Cook for 10-12 mins partially covered, until the veg has softened. Stir in the garlic, rosemary, bay leaves, fennel seeds, if using, and the sugar, cooking for a few more minutes until fragrant.

2 Splash in the white wine and reduce by half. Pour in the stock, milk and Worcestershire sauce. Bring to the boil, then place a lid on askew, and set the heat to a simmer. Cook for 3½ hrs, then stir in the chard stalks. Cook for a further 30 mins until reduced but there is still some liquid, and the flavours have developed. When you press down into the ragu with a ladle, liquid should slowly fill it but it shouldn't flood in. Stir in the chard leaves and season to taste. *Will keep chilled for up to three days.*

3 When the ragu has 15 mins left, make the béchamel. Heat the butter in a large saucepan over a medium heat until foaming. Stir in the flour and cook for 2-3 mins until darkened in colour. Splash in the milk, a little at a time, whisking well, making sure you get right into the corner of the pan. Once all the milk has been added, grate in the nutmeg and bring to a gentle simmer. Cook, stirring frequently, for 4-5 mins until thickened, then remove from the heat, whisk in the ricotta and half the parmesan. Season well and set to one side.

4 To assemble the lasagne, remove and discard the rosemary sprigs and bay leaves from the ragu using a slotted spoon. Spread two ladles of béchamel over a large baking dish, then top with three ladles of ragu, spreading this right out to the edges too, then a layer of lasagne sheets. Repeat this process, to make around five layers, finishing with the final two ladles of béchamel. Scatter over the remaining parmesan. Season well with pepper. *Will keep chilled for up to a day or wrapped in the freezer for up to three months. Leave to cool first. Defrost thoroughly before baking.*

5 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Bake for 30-40 mins, or 40-50 mins from chilled until the edges are crispy.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING (12) 625 kcals • fat 29g • saturates 14g • carbs 49g • sugars 13g • fibre 5g • protein 36g • salt 1.53g

tips

- If you're not cooking for a crowd, divide the finished lasagne between two heatproof, freezerproof dishes and freeze one for another time.
- You can cook the ragu in a slow cooker on high for 6-8 hrs or in a pressure cooker on high for 1 hr.
- You can substitute the white wine for more milk.

Shoot director RACHEL BAYLY | Food stylist JESSICA MCINTOSH | Stylist HANNAH WILKINSON

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Hiya-yakko (cool tofu scramble bento), p30

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Family Aubergine fattah, **p36**

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recipes AILSA BURT *photographs* KIM LIGHTBODY

£3.75 per serving

Schmaltzy lentils with chicken, olives & lemon

The golden chicken fat (schmaltz) is put to good use here to add flavour to the lentils.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY**

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 4 skin-on chicken breasts
- 1 red onion, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 tsp sumac
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 500ml low-salt chicken stock
- 500g cooked lentils, tomato flavoured if you can get them
- 125g kale, finely chopped
- 1 lemon, half sliced and half juiced
- 50g green olives, pitted and roughly chopped
- small handful of parsley, finely chopped, to serve

1 Heat the olive oil in a casserole dish or deep frying pan over a medium-high heat. Season the chicken all over and add to the pan, skin-side down. Cook for 6-8 mins until well browned and golden, then flip and cook for 2-3 mins until just golden, they don't need to be cooked through at this point. Remove the chicken to a plate.

2 Stir the onion and garlic into the chicken pan. Cook for 2-3 mins before stirring in the spices. Cook for 1-2 mins until fragrant, then splash in the chicken stock, scraping the bottom to remove any browned bits. Mix in the lentils, kale, lemon slices and olives. Bring to a simmer, nestle the chicken breasts back in, skin-side up and cook for 8-10 mins until reduced and the chicken is cooked through. Season with the lemon juice and some black pepper, then garnish with the parsley to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW low cal • fibre • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 473 kcals • fat 19g • saturates 3g • carbs 19g • sugars 6g • fibre 16g • protein 48g • salt 1.52g

plan your week

We know life is busy, so to make things easier we're sharing this handy cut-out list with everything you need for our midweek meals.

SHOPPING LIST

FRESH PRODUCE

garlic
pak choi
purple sprouting broccoli
spring onions
fresh ginger
new potatoes
coriander
red onions
dill
lemons
kale
green olives
parsley
shallots
mushrooms
sage
coriander
lime

MEAT & FISH

2 smoked, peppered mackerel fillets
4 skin-on chicken breasts

STORECUPBOARD

turmeric
Szechuan peppercorns
sesame oil
tahini
Chinese five-spice
caster sugar
reduced-salt soy sauce
rice vinegar
chilli flakes
medium egg noodles
sunflower oil
garam masala
medium curry powder
low-salt chicken stock
low-salt vegetable stock
olive oil
dried oregano
tomato purée
400g can chopped tomatoes
2 x 400g can butter beans
sumac
500g cooked lentils
flatbreads
béchamel sauce

DAIRY & CHILLED

milk
feta
grated mozzarella

FREEZER

frozen sweetcorn
prawns

Per person costings do not include salt, pepper or oil

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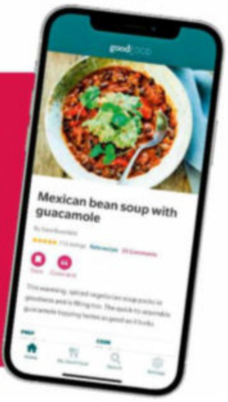

Sichuan mackerel noodles

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

- 1 tsp Sichuan peppercorns
- 2 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp tahini
- ½ tsp Chinese five-spice
- 2 small garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tsp caster sugar
- 1 tbsp reduced-salt soy sauce
- 1 tbsp rice vinegar
- ½ tsp chilli flakes
- 140g medium egg noodles
- 2 pak choi, leaves separated
- 100g purple sprouting broccoli, cut in half
- 2 smoked, peppered mackerel fillets, skin removed

1 Set a large saucepan over a medium heat and toast the peppercorns for 1-2 mins until fragrant, then lightly crush using a pestle and mortar or use the end of a rolling pin and a sturdy bowl. Mix with the sesame oil, tahini, Chinese five-spice, garlic, sugar, soy, vinegar and chilli flakes.

2 In the same saucepan, add the noodles, pour over boiling water and cook following pack instructions. Add the pak choi and broccoli for the final 2 mins, then drain, reserving a mugful of the cooking water. Mix in the tahini sauce and a decent splash of the reserved cooking water and give it a good stir to coat. Flake in the smoked mackerel and gently fold in, season to taste and serve.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • omega-3 • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 816 kcals • fat 41g • saturates 7g • carbs 72g • sugars 10g • fibre 9g • protein 35g • salt 2.97g

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Garlic mushroom flatbread pizzas

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY** **V**

- 2 shallots, halved and finely sliced
- 300g mushrooms, quartered
- 3 garlic cloves, sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- small handful of parsley, finely chopped
- 2 flatbreads
- 4 tbsp béchamel sauce
- 75g mozzarella, grated
- 6 sage leaves
- green salad, to serve

1 Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Toss the shallots, mushrooms and garlic with the oil and some seasoning on a large baking tray. Spread out evenly and roast in the oven for 12-15 mins until just golden all over. Remove from the oven and transfer to a bowl along with any juices and mix in the parsley.

2 Arrange the flatbreads on the baking tray and spread over the béchamel sauce. Scatter over the mozzarella, cooked mushrooms and sage leaves, then cook in the oven for 6-8 mins until golden and melted. Serve cut into wedges, with a green salad on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW fibre • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 466 kcals • fat 22g • saturates 9g • carbs 44g • sugars 5g • fibre 6g • protein 20g • salt 0.75g

£2.42 per serving

Garam masala prawn & corn soup

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY**

- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- 3 spring onions, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 15g ginger, grated
- 2 tsp garam masala
- 1½ tsp medium curry powder
- 600ml low-salt chicken stock
- 500g new potatoes, cut into bite-size pieces
- 200g frozen sweetcorn
- 300g prawns, defrosted if frozen
- 200ml milk
- small handful of coriander, finely chopped

To serve

- 1 lime, cut into wedges
- crusty bread

1 Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium heat. Tip in the spring onions, garlic and ginger and cook for 2-3 mins until sizzling and fragrant. Mix in all the spices and cook for a further minute until aromatic. Splash in the stock and new potatoes. Bring to the boil and simmer for 12-14 mins, until the potatoes are almost tender.

2 Stir in the sweetcorn, prawns and milk, and cook for a further 2-4 mins until the prawns are cooked through. Season to taste, sprinkle with coriander and serve with lime wedges to squeeze over and some crusty bread on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW low fat • low cal • vit c • iron
PER SERVING 216 kcals • fat 6g • saturates 2g • carbs 24g • sugars 5g • fibre 4g • protein 14g • salt 0.98g

Shoot director GILLIAN MCNEIL | Food stylist TONIA GEORGE | Stylist FAYE WEARS

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Greek-style beans

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY** **V**

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large red onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1½ tsp dried oregano
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 300ml low-salt vegetable stock
- ½ tsp caster sugar
- 2 x 400g can butter beans, drained and rinsed
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 50g feta, crumbled
- small handful of dill, finely chopped
- toasted sourdough, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a deep frying pan over a medium-high heat. Add the onions with a pinch of salt and cook for 5 mins, until beginning to soften and the edges are turning golden. Mix in the garlic, oregano and tomato purée. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for 3-4 mins, stirring, until the purée turns dark red.

2 Mix in the tomatoes, stock and sugar. Swill the can out with a splash of water, then pour into the pan as well. Leave it simmer away for 10-12 mins over a low-medium heat, then mix in the beans. Stir well, then leave to simmer for 2-3 mins before seasoning to taste with salt, pepper and a little lemon juice. Serve with the feta and dill scattered over the top, with toasted sourdough on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low cal • fibre • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 254 kcals • fat 10g • saturates 3g • carbs 26g • sugars 10g • fibre 10g • protein 12g • salt 0.41g

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BONUS RECIPE

Berbere-spiced meatballs

Hailing from Ethiopia and Eritrea, berbere is a peppery spice mix that's earthy and slightly sweet. It's paired here with beef in a tomato sauce for a warming supper on a cold evening. Serve with jewelled rice or couscous. **Ailsa Burt**

SERVES 4-6 **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 50 mins **EASY** ❄

500g 12% fat beef mince
1 tbsp berbere spice
1 egg, beaten
3 garlic cloves, crushed
25g dried breadcrumbs
small handful of parsley, finely chopped
rice or couscous, to serve

For the sauce
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, sliced
50g briny olives, pitted
½ lemon, zested and juiced
400g can chopped tomatoes
1 cinnamon stick
250ml chicken stock

1 Tip the mince, berbere, egg, garlic, breadcrumbs and most of the parsley into a bowl and season well. Squidge the mixture together using your hands, breaking up the meat, then roll into 30 balls and put on a plate. Chill until needed. *Will keep chilled for a day, or frozen on a tray. Once frozen solid, transfer to a container or bag to keep for up to two months. Defrost overnight in the fridge before continuing with the recipe.*

2 Drizzle half the oil into a large casserole dish over medium heat and fry the meatballs for 6-8 mins until browned. Transfer to a plate.

3 Drizzle in the remaining oil and stir in the onion. Cook for 10 mins with a pinch of salt until softened. Stir in the garlic and cook for 2 mins. Tip in the olives, lemon zest, tomatoes, cinnamon, stock and a little lemon juice. Bring to a simmer and bubble gently for 15-20 mins. Nestle in the meatballs and cook for 15 mins until the sauce is thickened and the meatballs are cooked through. Scatter over the remaining parsley. Serve with rice or couscous, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING (6) 274 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 5g • carbs 7g • sugars 4g • fibre 2g • protein 25g • salt 0.8g

Recipe taken from the February 2024 subscriber edition of Good Food

Celebrate Ramadan

Plan ahead for the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and the breaking of the fast with these sharing recipes from food writer **Soha Darwish**

photographs CHRIS TERRY

Ramadan Kareem everyone! This is the official Ramadan greeting in Egypt and across the Arab world. In Arabic it means 'Ramadan is generous', the generosity here refers to the merits and spiritual gains you take back from this holy month through fasting, praying, charitable activities and social gatherings – it's like a month of endless bonuses.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, which is called 'Hijri year', and it is the most important month. Muslims all around the world observe Ramadan by fasting from food and water from dawn until sunset.

What I want to share with you here is how I remember Ramadan in my childhood years as well as an adult in Egypt. The festivities in Egypt during Ramadan are like no other place. It is known among Muslims and Arabs as one of the top destinations to visit during the holy month. I love how Egypt offers everything from prayers, spiritual rituals and huge tables of free Iftar meals laid in almost every corner of its decorated streets, to the bustling Ramadan Nights in lavish tents serving mouth-watering Suhoor meals with live entertainment that keeps going until before dawn. Everyone wants to experience this wonderful time of year – Christians in Egypt enjoy it just as much. In Ramadan, the day starts with a body-fuelling meal called 'Suhoor' between midnight and dawn prayer, after which the fasting begins.

There are famous Suhoor staples, and it's all food mindfully selected to set up the body for the long hours of fasting. The most famous is 'foul medames' (fava beans), which has a low glycaemic index, releasing energy slowly, and is also a source of plant protein. Other Suhoor staples are eggs, yogurt, and dates – at Iftar, the second and main meal of the day at sunset, dates are often eaten first to break the fast, an Islamic tradition after prophet Mohamed.

Just before sunset, friends and relatives start gathering at homes, while the hype in the kitchen gets a bit intense in the final countdown to Iftar. Food has to be ready and served exactly on the dot at Maghrib (sunset) prayer time, not a minute before or after. I have to say, as a host, it can feel like a military operation, especially with the loud cannon fire sound (another Ramadan tradition) declaring the end of fasting; precision is not taken lightly in Ramadan. But let me tell you that there is nothing more rewarding than that first sip of water or a thirst-quenching drink, the euphoria is just indescribable.

After Iftar the festivities begin with Taraweeh prayers, a special prayer only during Ramadan, then unforgettable suhoor outings in Arabian Nights-themed tents, which I got to experience from my adolescent years onwards.

As a child, my parents would opt to stay home watching entertaining TV programmes and TV series specially produced for Ramadan. You can't keep up with all the star-studded shows competing to capture their audience's attention throughout the whole month.

An average Iftar table in a family home is usually a buzzing long table of soup, a few appetisers and a couple of mains. The vibes around the table with all the Ramadan decorations and lanterns are just ecstatic. I love a celebratory meal with friends and family in any religious or social occasion, except in Ramadan, we get to do this for 30 days continuously!

Here, I'm sharing five dishes that are popular among families during Ramadan in Egypt.

Soha Darwish grew up in Alexandria with Syrian heritage and is a London-based food writer, culinary consultant and food blogger. Her cooking style is defined by easy, hassle-free recipes with big flavours inspired by the Middle East. *@sohadarwish_food*

Aubergine fattah, p36

Aubergine fattah

Fatteh or fattah is an all-time Middle Eastern favourite: it is truly addictive, fun to make and easily takes the centre of the table. I love the fact that it does not need special culinary skills nor any finesse to perfect – it's a layered dish of crispy fried bread, meat or vegetables, yogurt sauce and a colourful garnish. This is my family recipe for aubergine fattah which I genuinely believe is the best version for this beloved dish.

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 30 mins plus soaking **COOK** 25 mins **EASY**

1.5kg aubergines (around 8), cut into 4cm cubes
500ml vegetable oil, for frying
3 large Lebanese pittas, cut into 4cm squares
2 tbsp olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
500g beef mince
1 tsp Arabic mixed spice or baharat
2 tsp pomegranate molasses

For the yogurt

500g plain yogurt
2 tbsp tahini
3 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tsp pomegranate molasses
½ lemon, juiced

To serve

1 tbsp olive oil
50g pine nuts, toasted
2 garlic cloves, crushed
½ tsp sumac
50g pomegranate seeds
large handful of parsley, finely chopped

1 Tip the aubergine into a bowl and cover with 3 tsp salt. Pour over cold water and set aside to soak for 2 hrs. Drain thoroughly and tip out onto a clean tea towel to dry well. This helps the aubergine absorb less oil when frying and makes them less greasy. If short on time you can skip this step.

2 Pour the vegetable oil into a large saucepan ensuring it is no more than a third full and put over a medium heat. Heat until it reaches 170C on a cooking thermometer or a cube of bread dropped in browns in 30 seconds. Cook the pitta, in batches, for 30 seconds to 1 min until golden and crispy. Remove using a slotted spoon to a plate lined with kitchen paper. Keep the oil over the heat and next add the aubergine in batches. Fry for 6-8 mins until golden and soft.

3 Heat the olive oil in a large, deep frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 10 mins until the edges are golden. Stir in the beef, breaking it up with a wooden spoon, along with the mixed spice and the pomegranate molasses. Increase the heat to medium-high and brown the meat all over until cooked through, around 10 mins. Meanwhile, mix the yogurt with the tahini, garlic and pomegranate molasses and season to taste with the lemon juice and some salt and pepper.

4 To serve, heat the olive oil over medium heat and stir in the pine nuts and garlic. Fry for 3-4 mins, until golden and aromatic. Arrange the fried pitta on a serving platter with the aubergine, sprinkle over the meat, then the yogurt and scatter over the fried pine nut mixture, sumac, pomegranate seeds and parsley. Serve immediately.

GOOD TO KNOW fibre • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING (8) 432 kcals • fat 25g • saturates 6g • carbs 28g • sugars 12g • fibre 7g • protein 20g • salt 0.92g

Shorbet lesan asfour (orzo pasta soup)

Soup is a must on any Iftar table, which makes a lot of sense. It is a gentle start to eating again after long hours of fasting. I chose the most nostalgic and easiest soup to make as it takes just a few minutes. There are a few variations for shorbet lesan asfour, which translates in Arabic as bird's tongue soup. It can be alarming if you don't know that 'lesan asfour' is what we call orzo pasta, as it has the shape of a bird's tongue.Traditionally we use chicken broth, and sometimes we add small meatballs, or you can have it with a vegetable broth instead and meat-free.

SERVES 8 **PREP** 5 mins **COOK** 10 mins **EASY**

1 tbsp ghee or butter
180g orzo
1 mastic crystal (optional – available online or in Middle Eastern or Mediterranean shops)
2 litres good-quality chicken stock
2 cardamom pods
2 bay leaves

1 Heat the ghee in a medium saucepan over a medium heat. Add the orzo and stir to coat in the ghee, then stir in the mastic crystal, if using. Toast for 2-3 mins, stirring regularly, until the orzo is golden.

2 Pour in the chicken stock, then add the cardamom pods and bay leaves and bring to a boil. Simmer for 6-8 mins until the orzo is just tender. Remove the cardamom pods and bay leaves, then season to taste. Serve hot.

GOOD TO KNOW low fat • low cal
PER SERVING 131 kcals • fat 3g • saturates 1g • carbs 17g • sugars 0.5g • fibre 2g • protein 9g • salt 1.4g

easy

Sharkasiya

Sharkasiya is derived from the word Sharkas, which refers to the Circassian people, an ethnic group who lived in Turkey during the Ottoman Empire. It's another example of the Egyptian cuisine's diversity and how it incorporated staples from various parts of the world. Decades ago, sharkasiya was typically cooked in the kitchens of Egyptian families with Turkish ties or ancestors. Sharkasiya is a rich walnut bread sauce topped with chicken cutlets and served with white rice. There's something very soothing about this mellow nutty dish, that is now an opulent favourite across upper-middle-class households in Egypt regardless of their roots.

SERVES 6 **PREP** 25 mins
COOK 1 hr 20 mins **EASY**

1 whole chicken (around 1.2kg)
1 large onion, roughly chopped
1 carrot, roughly chopped
1 celery stick, roughly chopped
6 black peppercorns
2 bay leaves
500g white short-grain rice
neutral oil, for the tin
small handful of coriander, chopped, or whole leaves
25g walnuts, roughly chopped

For the sauce

2 tbsp ghee or butter
6 garlic cloves, half crushed, half roughly chopped
2 tsp ground coriander
3 slices white bread, crusts removed and roughly torn (around 140g)
150g walnuts
125ml whole milk

1 Put the chicken in a large, deep saucepan and cover with cold water until completely submerged. Add the onion, carrot, celery, peppercorns and bay leaves, and slowly bring to a boil over a gentle heat. Cook at a gentle simmer, skimming off any scum that rises to the top, for 45-60 mins until the chicken is cooked through. Carefully remove the chicken and set aside until cool enough to handle, then strain and reserve the stock. Put the stock back on the heat and reduce for 20-25 mins over a high heat until you have around 750ml-1 litre.

2 Meanwhile, tip the rice into a large saucepan and wash, agitating the grains around in the pan with your hands and carefully drain off the water. Repeat this several times, until the water turns from milky to almost clear. Add cold water until it reaches 1cm above the rice, and salt well. Bring to a boil over a high heat, then once boiling, cover with a tight-fitting lid and reduce the heat to its lowest setting. Let it cook for 15 mins, then switch off the heat and leave covered for at least 20 mins.

3 To make the sauce, heat the ghee in a pan over a medium heat. Once melted, stir in the crushed garlic and ground coriander and cook for 2-3 mins until fragrant. Set aside to cool slightly. Put the bread, walnuts and roughly chopped garlic in a food processor and blitz until finely chopped. Pour in the milk, 400ml of the reserved stock and add the fried garlic. Blitz again until smooth, adding a splash more stock if needed – you want a thick consistency. Return the mixture to the garlic pan and let it cook for 3-4 mins, adding a splash more stock if needed. Season well with salt and pepper.

4 Oil a 2.5 litre (27cm) bundt tin. Remove the bones from the chicken and tear the meat into large chunks. Season well. Pack the hot rice into the bundt tin and invert onto a lipped serving platter. Pour most of the sauce into the middle and around the rice, then top the rice with the chicken. Scatter over the coriander leaves and chopped walnuts to serve. Serve any extra sauce on the side.

PER SERVING 876 kcals • fat 46g • saturates 11g • carbs 65g • sugars 2g • fibre 4g • protein 49g • salt 0.79g

Cheese sambousek

Halfway through the soup course we start eyeing the food laid in front of us and we usually seek a bite-sized appetiser to nibble on while finishing the soup. On most occasions it will be fried filo pastry triangles called 'sambousek', that have a filling of either cheese or meat. My favourite is a white cheese similar to feta with nigella seeds. The combination is just magical and so easy to master. Usually, sambousek is prepared ahead of Ramadan and frozen in batches (which is very convenient for busy home cooks) then fried minutes before Iftar.

MAKES 24 **PREP** 25 mins
COOK 15 mins **EASY** **V**

- 200g feta, crumbled or Kashkawan stretchy cheese, grated
- 2 tbsp nigella seeds
- 1 tbsp plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 300-400g sambousek or filo pastry sheets, cut into 8-10cm wide strips
- 500ml vegetable oil, for frying

1 Mix together the cheese and nigella seeds in a bowl until combined. Tip the flour into a second bowl and gradually whisk in 250ml water, then set aside.

2 Lightly dust a clean work surface with flour and lay out one pastry strip. Add 1 tsp of the cheese mixture close to the top corner, then start folding into a triangle until you reach the lower end of the strip.

3 Brush the end of the pastry strip with the flour and water mixture and seal the triangle. Transfer to a baking tray lined with baking parchment and repeat with the remaining strips and mixture.

4 Pour the oil into a large saucepan, filling it no more than halfway. Heat until the oil reaches 180C on a cooking thermometer or a cube of bread browns in 30 seconds, then cook in batches of 6-8 for 1-2 mins on each side until golden all over. Transfer to a wire rack lined with kitchen paper and serve warm.

PER SAMBOUSEK 81 kcals • fat 4g • saturates 1g • carbs 8g • sugars 0.4g • fibre 0.5g • protein 3g • salt 0.32g

Kunafah

Kunafa or Knafeh is the most famous Ramadan dessert across the Arab world and the Middle East; sweet, rich, crunchy, and creamy inside – with numerous traditional variations. It was originally served in Ramadan during the Umayyad Caliphate when Muawiya – the Caliph – ordered his cook to prepare a rich dish to help him endure the fasting. Kunafah is a thin noodle-like dough, and is packed in loops and sold chilled or frozen in supermarkets. I have always found the process of making fresh kunafah in traditional Arabic souqs hypnotising. I vividly remember the kanafani – the person who makes kunafah – towering over a circular hot stove with a shower-head-like tool in his hand seeping with runny dough, skilfully drawing continuous spirals that are transformed instantly to hair-like noodles. Kunafah is usually finely chopped and laid in a tray with a filling of either cheese, clotted cream or toasted nuts with raisins. It's then baked until golden crunchy and drenched with sugar syrup.

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 40 mins plus cooling **COOK** 1 hr 40 mins **EASY** **V**

400g frozen kunafah
250g pure butter ghee, melted and cooled slightly, plus extra for the tin
50g pistachios, crushed (optional)

For the filling
6 tbsp cornflour
3 tbsp caster sugar
500ml whole milk
1 tsp vanilla extract
350g clotted cream or thick double cream
100g ricotta

For the syrup
250g caster sugar
½ lemon, juiced
½ tsp vanilla extract

1 To make the filling, whisk together the cornflour and sugar in a saucepan, then gradually whisk in the milk. Add the vanilla and clotted cream, then set over a low-medium heat. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook, stirring regularly, for 6-8 mins or until it thickens to the texture of a thick crème pâtissière. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool, whisking occasionally to prevent lumps forming. Spread onto a plate and set aside to cool fully.

2 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Line a large baking tray with baking parchment. Using a rolling pin, bash the frozen kunafah, still in its pack, until broken up into powdery pieces. Tip into a bowl and pour over the ghee, then toss together using your hands. Divide the mixture into two, tipping half onto a baking tray and patting out into a 24cm circle using your hands, ensuring there are no gaps. Using a spatula, scrape the cooled filling out on top of the kunafah, then scatter over the ricotta. Carefully cover with the remaining half of the kunafah mixture, trying not to leave any gaps. Bake for 30 mins until golden and crispy all over.

3 Meanwhile, to make the sugar syrup tip the sugar, lemon juice, vanilla and 250ml water into a saucepan and bring to a boil. Cook for 5-7 mins until the sugar has dissolved and has thickened slightly, then set aside to cool to room temperature.

4 Remove the kunafah from the oven and leave to cool for 15 mins, then invert onto a serving dish. Pour over the cooled syrup to serve and garnish with the pistachios, if using.

PER SERVING (8) 972 kcals • fat 66g • saturates 38g • carbs 87g • sugars 44g • fibre 1g • protein 8g • salt 0.63g

Soha's tips

Frozen kunafah is also called 'quataifi' in some Middle Eastern shops; 'kadayif' or 'kataifi' in Mediterranean shops.

For a more traditional take, swap out the thick double cream for 2 x 125ml packs of Puck thick cream (available in Middle Eastern shops) and reduce the cornflour to 3 tbsp.

Shoot director JORDAN EDMONDS MOORE | Food stylist JESSICA MCINTOSH | Stylist FAYE WEARS

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Beyond the bowl

Just one ingredient and a whole lot of care goes into Nestlé Shredded Wheat, a breakfast classic lovingly produced in Britain

Whether you enjoy yours with warm or cold milk, there are only a few things more comforting than a bowl of Shredded Wheat in the morning. But have you ever wondered where this much-loved cereal comes from?

It might surprise you to know that this iconic cereal was created more than 100 years ago as an alternative to a cooked breakfast. Fast forward to now and Shredded Wheat remains a storecupboard staple, with a recipe, shape and flavour that has hardly changed in the intervening years.

Perfection in every box

To this day, Shredded Wheat is made from a single ingredient, wholegrain wheat, which is grown right here in Britain by passionate farmers like Harry (pictured, right), a fifth-generation farmer from Northamptonshire. Once harvested, the wheat goes directly to the Shredded Wheat factory in Wiltshire. There, it's shredded and formed into its famous biscuit shape, overseen by performance manager Justin, who knows everything there is to know about making this breakfast classic – after all, he's been doing the job for 25 years.

Then it's time to pack and distribute Shredded Wheat to breakfast tables across the country – except for the boxes that are donated to a local charity, Trowbridge Future (pictured below), which helps to combat social isolation. It's a place where people can come together, have a chat and fill up with a delicious bowl of Shredded Wheat.

Nestlé
ORIGINAL
SHREDDED
WHEAT
100%

Wheat farmer Harry

Trowbridge
Future

Trina from Nestlé and Zoe from Trowbridge Future

Of course, enjoying this versatile cereal at breakfast is just one option. It also works a treat in cakes, savoury snacks and on-the-go bars. Why not give these recipes a try and see for yourself?

Cheese straws

MAKES 18 PREP 10 mins, plus chilling COOK 15 mins EASY

- 200g unsalted butter, cold
- 300g plain flour
- 100g cheddar cheese, grated
- 2 Shredded Wheat biscuits, finely crumbled
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- 2 free-range eggs, 1 beaten
- 40g parmesan, grated
- 50g pesto, to serve (optional)

1 In a large bowl, rub the butter and flour together with your hands to achieve a breadcrumb consistency. Mix in the cheese, Shredded Wheat, cayenne pepper and a pinch of salt.

2 Crack in an egg, then add 3-5 tbsp water a little at a time (only use what you need). Using your hands, bring everything together to a firm dough, then wrap and chill in the fridge for 30 mins.

3 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Divide the dough in half, then roll one half out on a lightly floured worksurface and shape into a rough square, approximately 1cm thick. Using a knife or roller cutter, slice the dough into 18 strips roughly 2cm wide.

4 Twist each strip a few times and place onto a lined baking tray. Brush with the beaten egg, then sprinkle over the parmesan. Repeat with the other dough half, then bake for 15 mins until crisp. Serve with pesto on the side, if you like.

PER SERVING 204 kcals • fat 13.7g • saturates 7.8g • sugars 0.3g • salt 0.28g • fibre 1g • protein 5g

Lemon drizzle loaf cake

SERVES 8 **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 40 mins **MORE EFFORT**

7 Shredded Wheat biscuits, blended in a food processor to flour consistency
1½ tsp baking powder
50g ground almonds
90g caster sugar, plus extra 30g for syrup
2 lemons, zested and juiced
2 medium free-range eggs
70ml rapeseed oil
225g Greek yogurt (0% fat)
50g lemon curd

For the decoration

150g icing sugar
2 lemons, 1 juiced, 1 thinly sliced

1 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4, then line a 2lb (about 14 x 24cm) loaf tin with baking parchment.

2 Put the Shredded Wheat, baking powder and ground almonds in a large mixing bowl and stir until combined. Add the sugar and lemon zest, then mix again. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs and mix through the oil and yogurt until fully combined, then pour into the dry mixture and stir thoroughly.

3 Spoon half the mixture into the tin, then use the back of a teaspoon to make a small channel down the middle – making sure to leave a small gap at either end. Carefully spoon the lemon curd into the channel, then top with the remaining mix. Bake for 40 mins or until an inserted skewer comes out clean.

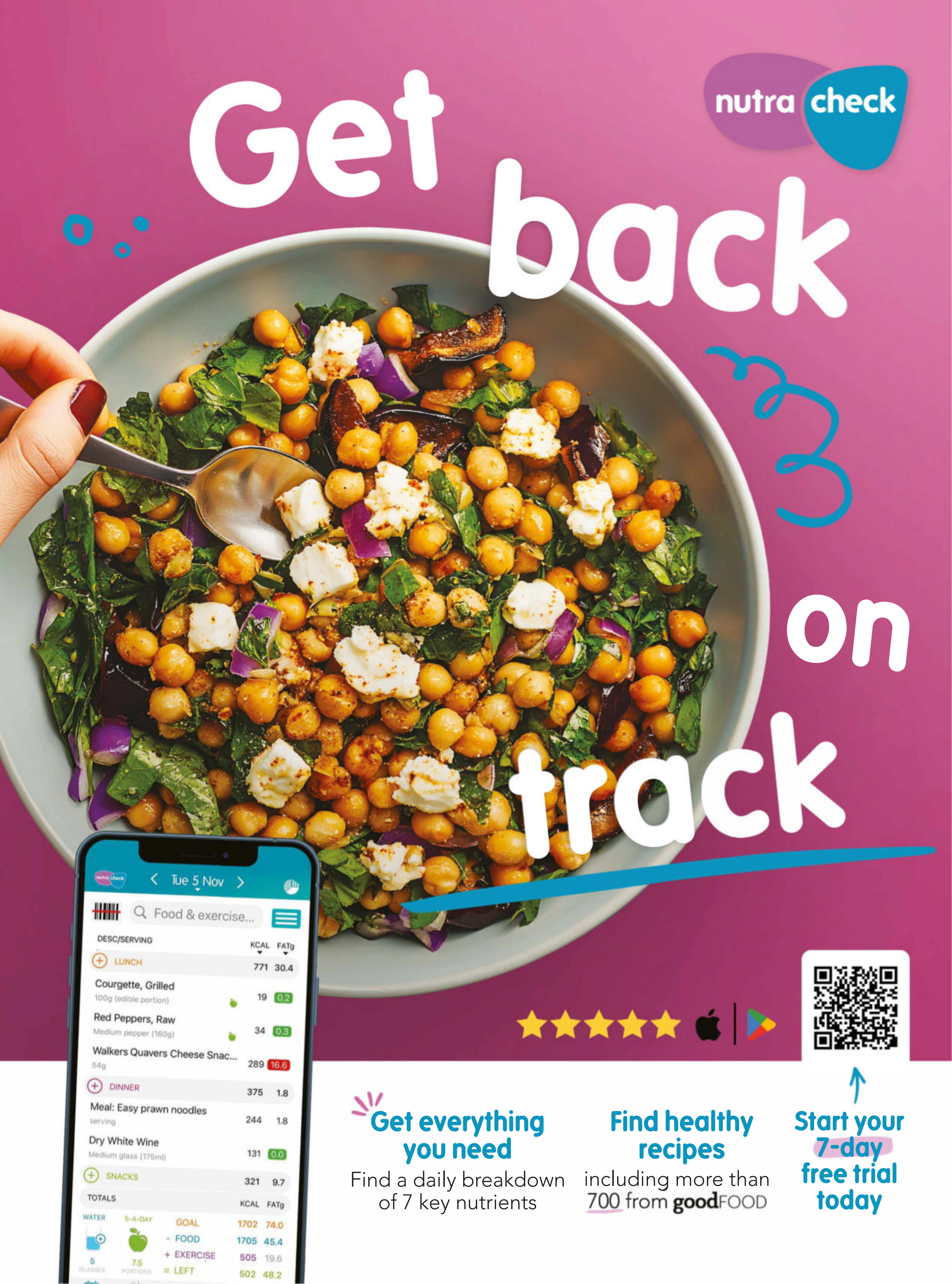
4 To make the syrup, add the 30g caster sugar, 100ml water and lemon juice to a small saucepan over a medium heat, stirring occasionally until the sugar dissolves. Increase to a high heat, then boil until it has a syrup consistency.

5 Once cooked, remove the cake from the oven and leave to cool for 10 mins in the tin. While cooling, use a skewer to poke holes in the top and pour over the syrup, allowing time for it to soak in before removing from the tin.

6 To decorate, mix the icing sugar and lemon juice together to make a runny icing. Once the cake is completely cool, drizzle over the top and finish with lemon slices.

PER SERVING 377 kcals • fat 14g • saturates 1.8g • sugars 38.1g • salt 0.33g • fibre 2.8g • protein 8.7g

Scan the QR code to find out more about Shredded Wheat and how it's made in Britain



Tue 5 Nov

Food & exercise...

DESC/SERVING	KCAL	FATg
LUNCH	771	30.4
Courgette, Grilled 100g (edible portion)	19	0.2
Red Peppers, Raw Medium pepper (160g)	34	0.3
Walkers Quavers Cheese Snac... 54g	289	16.6
DINNER	375	1.8
Meal: Easy prawn noodles serving	244	1.8
Dry White Wine Medium glass (175ml)	131	0.0
SNACKS	321	9.7

TOTALS	KCAL	FATg
GOAL	1702	74.0
- FOOD	1705	45.4
+ EXERCISE	505	19.6
= LEFT	502	48.2

WATER 5 GLASSES

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Air fryer cheese & chorizo quesadillas **p49**

Cook smart

Spend less and make more of what you've got in the fridge and storecupboard

Slow cooker Honey & sriracha chicken **p52**

Yellow sticker Leafy greens soup with chilli-honey halloumi croutons **p55**

COOK SMART

Air fryer comfort food

Serve up cosy pub classics at home without needing to turn on the oven

recipes SAMUEL GOLDSMITH *photographs* KIM LIGHTBODY

Air fryer hunter's chicken

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 35 mins **EASY**

- 2 small skinless chicken breasts or 1 large cut in half lengthways
- 4-6 rashers smoked streaky bacon
- 3 tbsp thick barbecue sauce
- 40g cheddar, grated
- seasonal veg, potato wedges and ketchup, to serve

1 Heat the air fryer to 190C. Wrap the chicken breasts in the bacon rashers widthways. Or, if the chicken breasts are very thick, cook in the air fryer for 10 mins first, then cook the bacon-wrapped chicken for 15 mins.

2 Brush with barbecue sauce all over and scatter over the cheese (you may not need all of it). Cook in the air fryer for another 10 mins until the chicken is cooked through. Serve with seasonal veg, potato wedges and ketchup on the side, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW gluten free
PER SERVING 403 kcals • fat 21g • saturates 9g • carbs 8g • sugars 6g • fibre 0.3g • protein 45g • salt 2.6g

Air fryer veggie sausage casserole

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY** **V**

- 4-6 vegetarian sausages
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp vegetable or olive oil
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 3 roasted red peppers from a jar, sliced
- 400g can borlotti or cannellini beans
- 1 tsp red wine vinegar
- dash Worcestershire sauce (or vegetarian alternative)
- 1 tsp mixed dried herbs

1 Heat the air fryer to 180C. Put the sausages in the air fryer and cook for 5 mins. Coat the onion in the oil, then add to the air fryer and cook for a further 5 mins.

2 Combine all the ingredients in either a heatproof dish or remove the base of your air fryer basket and cook directly in the drawer. Season with salt and pepper. Cook for 20 mins until the sausages are cooked through and the sauce has thickened a little. Serve with a grinding of black pepper.

GOOD TO KNOW low fat • low cal • fibre • 4 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 329 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 1g • carbs 41g • sugars 16g • fibre 15g • protein 17g • salt 2.3g

Shoot director GILLIAN MCNEIL | Food stylist TONIA GEORGE | Stylist FAYE WEARS

Air fryer cheese & chorizo quesadillas

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 20-40 mins **EASY**

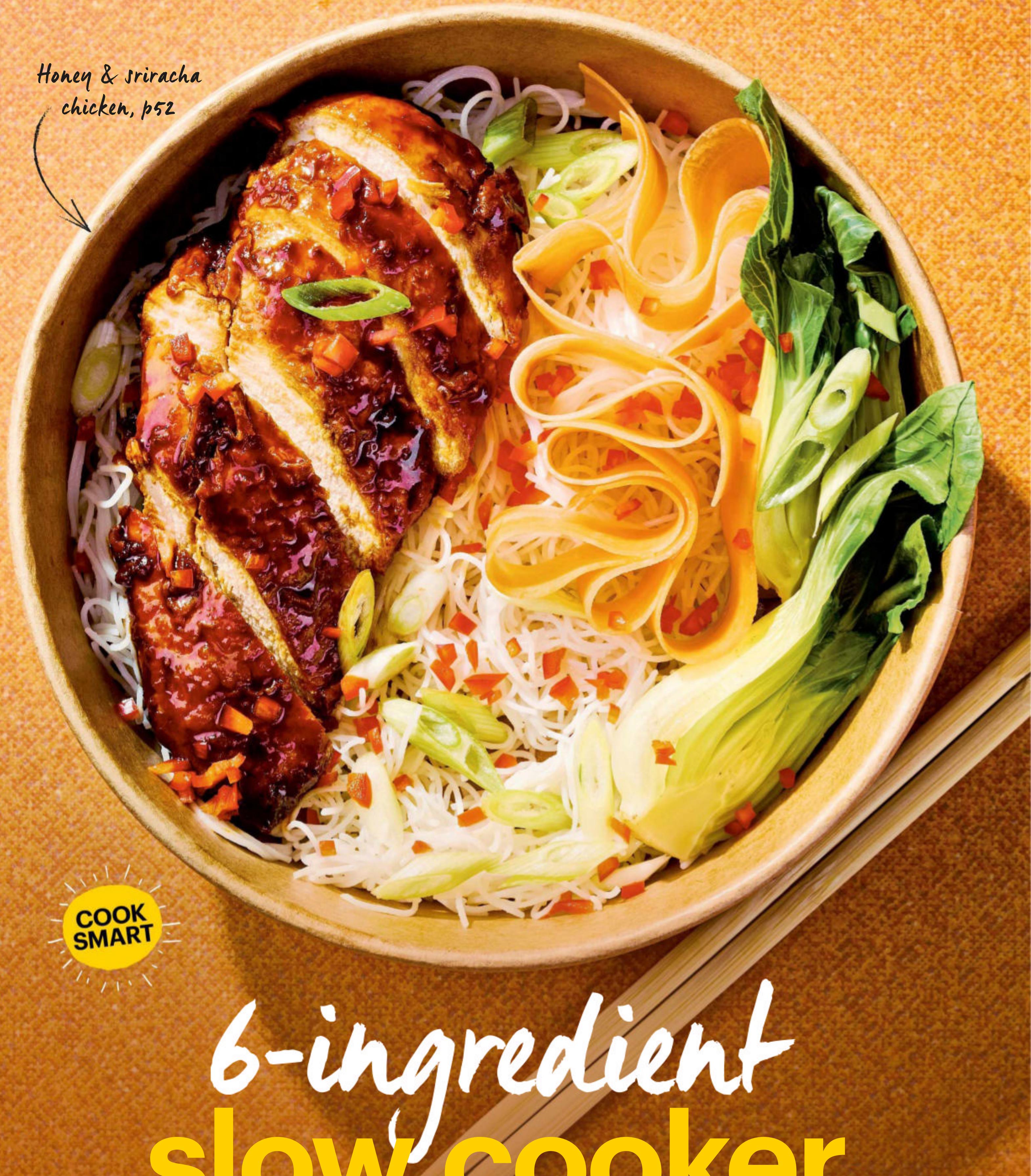
250g cheddar, grated
2 medium tomatoes, finely chopped
150g chorizo, finely chopped
½ small bunch of parsley, finely chopped
1 red chilli, finely chopped (deseeded if you prefer less heat)
6-8 spring onions, finely sliced
1 lime, juiced
8 large flour tortillas (see tip, below)
lime wedges, to serve

1 Heat the air fryer to 180C. Combine all the ingredients except the tortillas and lime in a bowl.
2 Spoon the filling onto one half of each tortilla, then fold over the other half and press down firmly. You want the filling to be near the edge but not falling out.
3 Put as many tortillas as you can into your air fryer in a single layer – it's fine if they overlap a little. Put a spoon or heatproof utensil on top to stop the tortillas coming apart during cooking. Cook for about 10 mins, turning after 5 mins until golden and crisp at the edges. Serve with the lime wedges on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • vit c
PER SERVING 663 kcals • fat 39g • saturates 20g • carbs 45g • sugars 5g • fibre 4g • protein 32g • salt 3.7g

tip

We used large tortilla wraps, but check the size of your air fryer to ensure it will fit one of these folded in half. If your air fryer is too small then you can use smaller tortilla wraps and make more or use any leftover filling for a cheese toastie.



Honey & sriracha chicken, p52

COOK SMART

6-ingredient slow cooker

Maximise flavour and minimise effort with recipes from **Nathan Anthony**, all using just a handful of ingredients

photographs DAN JONES

Lamb with balsamic vingar, p52

Honey & sriracha chicken

I prefer to sear the chicken before slow-cooking it, for extra flavour, but you can skip this step.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 3-6 hrs **EASY**

- 4 whole chicken breasts
- cornflour, for coating
- vegetable oil, for frying
- 6 tbsp sriracha
- 4 tbsp honey
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 3 garlic cloves, grated
- 1 tbsp dark soy sauce

To serve

- rice noodles, cooked to pack instructions
- pak choi, steamed
- carrots, cut into ribbons
- spring onions, sliced
- 1 red chilli, chopped (optional)

1 Coat the chicken breasts all over in 1 tbsp cornflour, then pan-fry over a medium heat in 1 tbsp of hot oil for 2 mins, or until golden on both sides.
2 Transfer the chicken to the slow cooker with all the other ingredients. Cook on high for 3 hrs or low for 6 hrs.
3 Slice and serve the chicken breasts on top of rice noodles, your choice of veg, spring onions and chopped red chilli.

GOOD TO KNOW low fat
PER SERVING 281 kcals • fat 5g • saturates 1g • carbs 24g • sugars 20g • fibre 0g • protein 36g • salt 2.38g

nathan's tip

You can skip pan-frying the chicken beforehand; the texture will just be a bit different.

Lamb with balsamic vinegar

I'd never eaten lamb with balsamic vinegar until I made this recipe, and now I'm never going back. The sweetness from the balsamic glaze works so well with the rich fattiness of the lamb.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 4-8 hrs **EASY**

- 1.5kg lamb shoulder, bone in
- vegetable oil, for frying
- 1 red onion, cut into wedges
- 4 garlic cloves, sliced
- 2 large sprigs of fresh rosemary, cut into smaller sprigs
- 500ml lamb or chicken stock
- 100ml balsamic vinegar
- air-fried cubed potatoes and green veg, to serve

1 Season and sear the lamb shoulder all over in a large frying pan over a high heat with a little oil.
2 Add the red onion wedges to the bottom of the slow cooker and place the seared lamb on top.
3 Cut deep holes all over the lamb and fill them with the sliced garlic, then scatter around the sprigs of rosemary. Add the stock and then drizzle over 50ml of the balsamic vinegar. Cook on high for 4 hrs or low for 8 hrs until the lamb is completely tender. When the lamb is cooked, remove it carefully from the slow cooker and allow to rest.
4 Heat the remaining balsamic vinegar in a small saucepan until reduced and treacle-like in texture. Add all the cooking juices from the slow cooker into another saucepan and heat until reduced to a gravy.
5 To serve, either leave the shoulder whole and drizzle over the reduction, or remove the bone and shred the lamb using two forks. Drizzle over the balsamic reduction and serve with the gravy along with some air-fried cubed potatoes and green veg.

PER SERVING 653 kcals • fat 45g • saturates 21g • carbs 8g • sugars 6g • fibre 1g • protein 54g • salt 1.14g

nathan's tip

Use leftover cold lamb to make wraps with pomegranate seeds and cucumber yogurt.

Winter sausage meatballs & cream

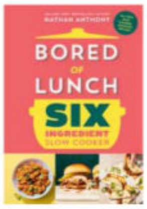
On a cold day, this is perfection served with some gorgeous buttery colcannon or mash and green veg. It's a very flexible dish that you can also enjoy with pasta or some nice crusty bread, if you prefer.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 3-8 hrs **EASY**

- 8-10 reduced-fat pork sausages
- vegetable oil, for frying
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 3 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 100ml double cream
- 2 handfuls of baby spinach leaves
- cornflour, for thickening (optional)
- colcannon and green veg, to serve

1 Squeeze the sausagemeat from the skins, then use wet hands to form it into 20 or so small meatballs.
2 Heat 1 tbsp of oil in a frying pan, season the meatballs and cook over a high heat for 1 min to seal, turning regularly. This ensures they won't stick together when cooked in the slow cooker.
3 Add the meatballs to the slow cooker with the garlic, mustard, thyme and 200ml boiling water (or chicken stock) and cook on high for 3-4 hrs or low for 7-8 hrs.
4 Once cooked, stir in the cream and the spinach to wilt. If the sauce looks thin, add 1 tbsp of cornflour mixed with a little water to thicken it. Serve with colcannon and green veg and enjoy!

PER SERVING 327 kcals • fat 23g • saturates 11g • carbs 11g • sugars 4g • fibre 3g • protein 17g • salt 2.75g



Recipes extracted from *Bored of Lunch: Six Ingredient Slow Cooker* by Nathan Anthony (£20, Ebury Press) and not retested by us. Photographs by Dan Jones.

Nathan rose to prominence with his Bored of Lunch blog, sharing recipes to get people cooking simple and wholesome meals every day. *@boredoflunch*

Storecupboard staples like oil and 'to serve' items are not included in the ingredient count.

Winter sausage meatballs & cream

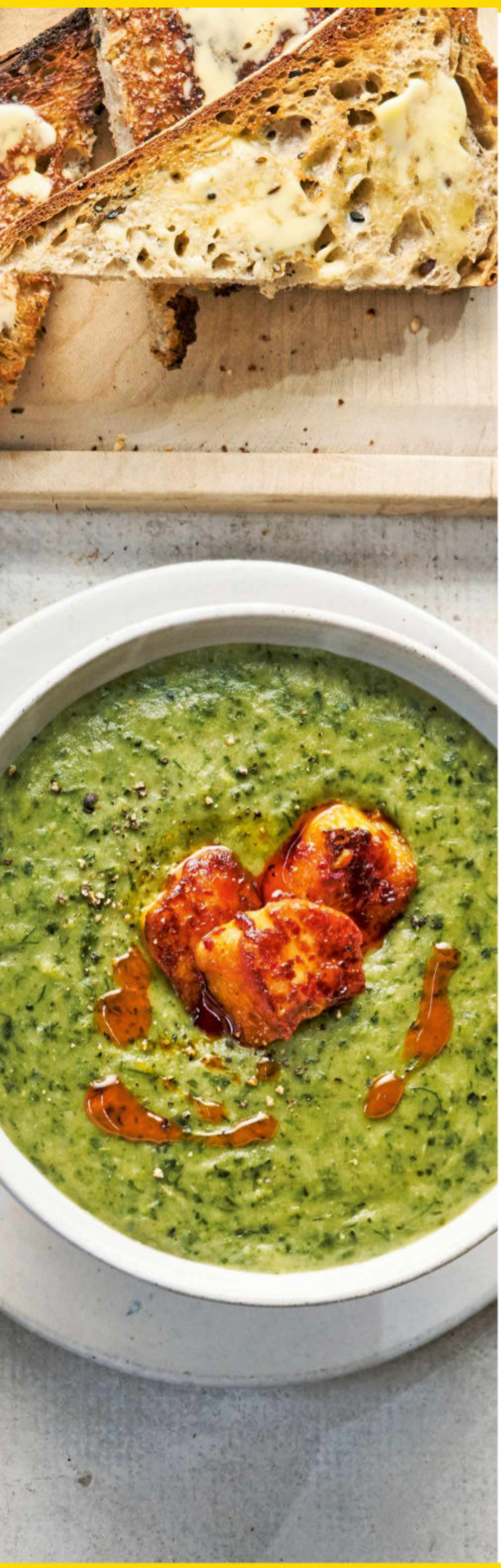
COOK SMART

The yellow sticker challenge

Next time you're at the supermarket, bag a few stickered items approaching their best-before date to save waste and whip up a delicious bargain meal

recipes AILSA BURT *photographs* CHRIS TERRY

Shoot director JORDAN EDMOND-MOORE | Food stylist JESSICA MCINTOSH | Stylist FAYE WEARS



Leafy greens soup with chilli-honey halloumi croutons

Make this with any leafy greens or herbs you spot discounted at the supermarket.

SERVES 4-6 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY** **V**

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, or bunch of spring onions, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 3 floury potatoes, around 500g, unpeeled and cut into 2cm cubes
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 100g crème fraîche
- 300g any past-their-best greens, (spinach, salad leaves, kale or cavolo nero), roughly torn
- 150g frozen peas
- small handful past-their-best soft herbs, roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp harissa paste
- 1 tbsp honey
- 250g block halloumi, cut into 2cm cubes, drained and patted dry
- toasted buttered sourdough, to serve

1 Heat 2 tbsp of the oil in a large, deep saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir in the onion and a pinch of salt and cook for 6-8 mins until softened around the edges. Stir in the garlic and potatoes and cook for 2-3 mins until fragrant. Pour over the stock and bring to a simmer. Let it bubble away for 10-15 mins until the potatoes are just tender then pour in the crème fraîche, greens and frozen peas. Bring back to a simmer and cook for 4-5 mins until the greens have all wilted and the crème fraîche has dissolved. Stir in the herbs and using a hand blender, blitz until smooth. Season.

2 Meanwhile, heat the remaining oil in a frying pan. Stir in the harissa and honey and let it melt. Pour into a bowl, then add the halloumi to the pan and brown all over, shuffling the pan occasionally for 4-5 mins. Return the harissa mixture to the pan and stir quickly to coat the halloumi. Scatter the halloumi croutons on top of the soup and serve the sourdough on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • vit c • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING (6) 369 kcals • fat 23g • saturates 12g • carbs 22g • sugars 7g • fibre 5g • protein 15g • salt 1.68g

3 more ideas

Leafy greens pesto

Tip **100g greens** (**spinach**, **cavolo nero** or **kale** would work) stalks and all, into a food processor. Add **50g toasted nuts**, we've used almonds but you can use any nuts you like, **50g grated hard cheese**, such as parmesan or grana padano, and **1 garlic clove**. Blitz until finely chopped, then drizzle in enough **olive oil** to bring it together. Season with salt, pepper and **lemon juice**.

Chilli greens

Heat **2 tbsp olive oil** in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Mix in **1 sliced chilli**, **3 finely sliced garlic cloves** and cook until the garlic is golden. Stir in **200g sliced greens**, and pour over **200ml white wine** then season well. Cover with a lid and cook for 8-10 mins, stirring occasionally until the greens have wilted. Serve with a roast chicken.

Slow cooker greens

Put your slow cooker on low. Heat **50g butter** and **1 tbsp olive oil** in a frying pan. Add **1 finely chopped onion** and fry for 5 mins over low heat until softened and translucent. Add **200g roughly chopped greens** to the pan and fry for 5 mins or until beginning to wilt. Tip into the slow cooker along with the **3 thinly sliced leeks**, **100ml vegetable stock** and **300ml double cream**. Cook with the lid on for 3 hrs, stirring occasionally. Stir in **100ml double cream**, **1 tsp Dijon mustard**, a good **grating of nutmeg** and **40g grated parmesan**, as well as some **seasoning** just before serving. *Will keep covered in the fridge for up to three days.* Stir through some cooked pasta to serve, if you like.

One base
three meals

COOK SMART

Make a batch of spiced lentils at the weekend then use it as the base for three more meals, including a crispy filo pie

recipes AILSA BURT *photographs* HANNAH TAYLOR-EDDINGTON

Green baked eggs

The base

Coconut, curry leaf & turmeric saucy lentils

Raid your spice cupboard to make this flavour-packed lentil dish. Use puy or green lentils as they hold their shape well once cooked.

MAKES 3 batches (total around 2.2kg)
PREP 15 mins **COOK** 55 mins
EASY V ❄

- 3 tbsp ghee, or coconut oil to make it vegan
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 1 tsp black mustard seeds
- 8 fresh curry leaves
- 6 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 40g ginger, grated
- 1 green chilli, deseeded if you like
- 2 tsp ground turmeric
- 1½ tsp ground coriander
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp nigella seeds
- 1.2 litres vegetable stock (ensure vegan, if needed)
- 400ml can coconut milk
- 600g dried puy or green lentils, rinsed

1 Heat the ghee or oil in a large, deep saucepan over a medium-high heat. Stir in the onions, mustard seeds and curry leaves with a pinch of salt and cook for 8-10 mins, stirring frequently, until the onions are caramelised a little around the edges, and the mustard seeds have popped. Mix in the garlic, ginger, chilli, turmeric, coriander, cumin and nigella seeds. Lower the heat to medium and cook for 3-4 mins, until fragrant.

2 Pour in the vegetable stock, coconut milk and lentils. Rinse out the can of coconut milk with water and add to the pan. Bring to the boil, then stir in the lentils. Cook for 30-40 mins until the lentils are tender and it has reduced. Season to taste and divide into three batches. *Will keep chilled for five days in an airtight container, or frozen for up to three months.*

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • fibre • iron • 2 of 5-a-day
PER BATCH (730g) 286 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 7g • carbs 29g • sugars 5g • fibre 8g • protein 14g • salt 0.27g

GF tip

This also tastes great served simply with parathas and natural yogurt.

MEAL ONE

Green baked eggs

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins plus soaking
COOK 10 mins **EASY** V

- 75g cashews
- 350ml hot vegetable stock
- 700g leftover coconut, curry leaf & turmeric saucy lentils (see left)
- 260g spinach
- 8 eggs
- crusty bread or toasted flatbreads to serve

For the drizzle

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp dukkah
- ½ tsp chilli flakes
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

1 Tip the cashews and stock into a blender and set aside to soak for 15 mins. Pour in the lentils and spinach and blend until vibrant, green and smooth. Pour into a frying pan and season to taste. Set over a medium heat. Once the sauce is gently bubbling, use the back of a spoon to create spaces for cracking the eggs into. Reduce the heat and cook over a low heat for 5 mins, then cover with a lid. Cook for 3-5 mins. The tops of the eggs will be cloudy but they should still have a slight jiggle and the yolks should be runny.

2 Meanwhile, for the drizzle, heat the oil in a small frying pan over a medium-high heat and tip in the dukkah, chilli flakes and garlic. Cook for 4-5 mins, until golden and fragrant. Spoon over the eggs, then serve with crusty bread, or toasted flatbreads.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • fibre • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 606 kcals • fat 35g • saturates 12g • carbs 35g • sugars 6g • fibre 10g • protein 33g • salt 1.0g

MEAL TWO

Curried chickpea brothy pasta

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY** **V**

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp tomato purée
- 400g can chickpeas, drained
- 750ml vegetable stock
- 700g leftover coconut, curry leaf & turmeric saucy lentils (see p56)
- 150g small pasta (we used macaroni)
- 150g kale
- flatbreads, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a deep saucepan over a medium heat. Stir in the onion with a pinch of salt and cook for 8-10 mins until softening around the edges. Mix in the tomato purée and cook for a further 3-5 mins until darkened and caramelised. Tip in the chickpeas, stock and leftover lentils. Bring to a gentle simmer and let it bubble away for 6-8 mins.

2 Meanwhile, cook the pasta according to pack instructions and drain well. Add the kale to the lentil mixture and cook for a further 5 mins. Add the pasta and stir well, season to taste and serve with some flatbreads for dipping.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day

PER SERVING 549 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 8g • carbs 69g • sugars 9g • fibre 16g • protein 24g • salt 0.78g

Shoot director FREDDIE STEWART | Food stylist JESSICA MCINTOSH | Stylist AGATHÉ GITS

MEAL THREE

Curried filo pie

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 45 mins **EASY** **V**

- 1 small cauliflower, around 800g
- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 4 spring onions, finely sliced
- 700g leftover coconut, curry leaf & turmeric saucy lentils (see p56)
- 2 tbsp lime pickle
- 100ml double cream
- 150g mature cheddar, grated
- 270g filo pastry
- 25g butter, melted
- 1 tsp nigella seeds

1 Discard any tatty outer leaves from the cauliflower, then cut the cauliflower into small florets. Thinly slice the stalk and leaves too. Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium-high heat. Stir in all the chopped cauliflower and the spring onions with 100ml hot water. Cook for 10-15 mins until soft and the water has evaporated.
2 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Stir in the leftover lentils, lime pickle and double cream. Bring to a gentle simmer, then remove from the heat and stir in the cheese. Tip into a baking dish (ours was 20 x 30cm) and spread out. Take each sheet of filo, tear and lightly scrunch up a bit and dot over the top of the filling, making sure the whole top is covered. Brush over the melted butter then scatter over the nigella seeds. Bake in the oven for 25-30 mins until golden and crispy.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 897 kcals • fat 50g • saturates 27g • carbs 73g • sugars 11g • fibre 14g • protein 33g • salt 1.79g

eat well for…

gut health

Dr Chintal Patel explains how choosing foods to support your digestion can lead to better all-round health

new series

Chintal is a long-serving GP for the NHS as well as a food content creator, cookbook author and our newest regular contributor. She has a passion for nutrition and lifestyle medicine and aims to help people approach cooking and eating in a way that supports overall well-being. *@drchintalskitchen*

The gut, or gastrointestinal tract, is responsible for digesting the food we eat, absorbing nutrients, and excreting waste. But did you know it also contains trillions of ‘friendly’ microorganisms, including bacteria, collectively known as the ‘gut microbiome’? These microorganisms help digest food, but research increasingly shows they play a crucial role in overall health, such as strengthening the immune system. The number of different ‘good’ microbes is a key indicator of a healthy microbiome. A less diverse microbiome has been linked to conditions like obesity, type 2 diabetes, irritable bowel syndrome, and even certain cancers. The right dietary choices, which will introduce and nurture more of those ‘healthy’ bacteria, can have a positive impact on gut health, ensuring your body stays in balance. With all this in mind, here are a few of the simple changes you can make.

Foods to eat more of

Maintain the balance of ‘good’ microorganisms in your gut by incorporating both probiotics and prebiotics into your diet.

PROBIOTICS are foods that contain live strains of the beneficial microorganisms naturally found in the gut. Consuming these regularly can help to promote a healthy balance of gut microorganisms. Additionally, the fermentation process used to make many of these foods can enhance their nutritional value. For instance, lactic acid can convert phytonutrients to a more active form which has been associated with improved heart and immune health.

Examples of probiotic foods
Kefir, live yogurt, kimchi, sauerkraut

PREBIOTICS are foods containing a type of fibre that our body can’t digest. Instead, they act as ‘food’ for the beneficial bacteria in your gut, supporting their growth and activity.

Examples of foods high in prebiotics
Vegetables: Onions, leeks, garlic, asparagus, mushrooms, Savoy cabbage, Jerusalem artichokes
Legumes and beans: chickpeas, butter beans, soy beans
Fruits: bananas, kiwi, apples
Wholegrains, nuts and seeds: oats, barley, almonds, cashews, flaxseed

Variety in your diet is key!

Foods to limit

Wherever possible, try to limit highly processed foods in your diet, because these are usually high in unhealthy fats, refined carbohydrates, sugars, salt and other additives. They also tend to be lower in fibre. Studies show that people who consume diets high in ultra-processed foods are more likely to have an imbalance of ‘bad’ gut bacteria. Try to cook from scratch using whole foods as much as possible.

High sugar intake disrupts the balance and health of the microbiome; it can feed harmful bacteria, reduce beneficial bacteria and lower gut microbial diversity. Try to avoid sugary drinks, eat desserts in moderation and reduce ultra-processed foods that are often high in sugar.

What else can I do?

You can also improve your overall health and gut health in other ways:

- **Limit alcohol** – alcohol can disrupt the balance of bacteria in the gut.
- **Exercise** – exercise can help increase the diversity of your microbiome.
- **Only take antibiotics if absolutely necessary** – antibiotics are beneficial at killing harmful bacteria, however, they can also kill the ‘good’ bacteria in the gut. Only take antibiotics when directed by your doctor.
- **Good sleep patterns and reducing stress** – have been linked to better gut function.

Photographs ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS, MAGDALENA NIEMCZYK – ELANART/CONNECT IMAGES/GETTY

Gut-friendly beans & seabass

With an impressive 10 plant points out of your 30 per week, and containing four of your five-a-day, this meal is packed with goodness.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY**

- 50g cashew nuts
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 50g capers
- 320g leeks, thinly sliced
- 320g Savoy cabbage, core removed and sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 320g baby spinach leaves
- 570g jar butter beans
- 4 x 140g sea bass fillets

For the dill yogurt

- 4 tbsp fat-free live Greek yogurt
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- small handful of dill, finely chopped

1 Soak the cashews in 200ml boiling water and set aside.

2 For the dill yogurt, mix the yogurt, lemon juice and dill in a bowl and set aside until ready to serve.

3 Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the capers until crispy, then remove and set aside, leaving behind the oil. Add the leeks, cabbage, garlic and a pinch of salt, then cover and cook over a medium heat until soft and almost fully cooked, about 5 mins.

4 Tip in the spinach leaves and the butter beans. Season with a little salt and pepper and stir well.

5 Blitz the soaked cashews and water into a smooth cream using a hand blender, then pour it over the veg in the pan. Cover and cook on a low heat for a few minutes until the spinach has wilted. Add a splash of water if needed.

6 Heat a dry frying pan over a medium-high heat. Slice a few slits into the skin of the sea bass fillets to prevent them from curling as they cook. Fry in the hot pan for a few minutes on each side until cooked through. Serve the vegetables topped with a sea bass fillet, a sprinkle of crispy capers with the dill yogurt on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 4 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 480 kcals • fat 21g • saturates 4g • carbs 23g • sugars 9g • fibre 13g • protein 43g • salt 1.21g

Dill
can relieve nausea, and help reduce bloating and flatulence
Garlic
contains prebiotic fibre and contains allicin which has anti-inflammatory properties
Savoy cabbage
contains dietary fibre to keep stools soft and prevent constipation
10 plant points
Butter beans
are a source of protein and fibre, helping you feel full to control hunger
Leeks
contains prebiotic fibre to feed 'good' gut bacteria for a healthy microbiome
Spinach
leafy green veg may help reduce the risk of cancer
Cashew nuts
nutrient-dense, may reduce gut inflammation
Live yogurt
contains 'good' gut bacteria to help replenish your microbiome
4 of your five-a-day
Extra virgin olive oil
contains polyphenols and phytochemicals important for heart, brain and gut health
High in fibre
especially prebiotic gut-healthy fibre

Recipe photograph HANNAH TAYLOR-EDDINGTON | Shoot director FREDDIE STEWART | Food stylist JESSICA MCINTOSH | Stylist AGATHE GITS

advertisement feature

New beginnings

Discover how Centrum can help support your nutritional needs in 2025 and beyond

Now the new year is here, it's the perfect time to start making small, positive changes in your life to take better care of yourself. This could be anything from reducing your screen time to getting out for a walk each day, or simply cooking more meals from scratch at home.

Of course, when it comes to food, a varied and balanced diet will provide the nutrients you need. But when you're faced with a lack of time for cooking, rising ingredient costs, or your own specific dietary needs or preferences, you might want to try incorporating Centrum's multivitamins into your daily routine to support your diet.

Tailored to you

Each multivitamin in the range contains a variety of nutrients in one daily tablet. Centrum understands that not everyone's nutritional needs are the same, which is why the products are specifically tailored to different genders and ages.

If you want to give Centrum's multivitamins a go but you're not sure where to start, head to centrum.co.uk and take the 'Choose your Centrum' quiz to find the right one for you.

WHAT DO CENTRUM MULTIVITAMINS CONTAIN?

Here are just a few of the vitamins you can find in Centrum's products and how they can help to support you.

Vitamin B1 (Thiamin) contributes to the normal function of the heart. It can be found in foods such as peas, nuts, wholegrain bread and some fruit, including bananas and oranges.
Vitamin B12 contributes to normal energy-yielding metabolism and the reduction of tiredness and fatigue. Sources include meat, fish, milk, cheese and eggs.
Vitamin C contributes to the normal function of the immune system. You'll find it in a wide variety of fruit and vegetables, including oranges, peppers, strawberries, broccoli and potatoes.
Vitamin D contributes to the maintenance of normal bones. It can be found in oily fish, red meat, egg yolks and fortified foods, such as fat spreads and breakfasts cereals.

Centrum

Shop the full Centrum range now in your local pharmacy, supermarket or online

health benefits of...

apples

Rich in vitamins, antioxidants and fibre, this common fruit is packed with goodness – nutritionist **Nicola Shubrook** explains

There are around 2,000 varieties of apple, ranging in colour from pale yellow and green through to deep red. Taste and texture vary too, from juicy to firm and sweet to tangy. Because there are so many varieties, you can buy British apples pretty much all year round, but traditionally they're in season in the UK from September to February.

One small apple (100g approx) contains

energy	51 kcal/215 KJ
protein	0.6g
fat	0.5g
carbohydrates	11.6g
fibre	2.5g
potassium	100mg
vitamin C	6mg

5 REASONS TO EAT APPLES

May lower cholesterol

Apples contain pectin, a natural fibre found in plants. Recent research by the European Journal of Nutrition found that eating pectin-rich whole apples had a cholesterol-lowering effect in healthy volunteers, compared to apple juice. A study by the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics also showed that consuming around 75g of dried apple (approximately two apples) helped to reduce cholesterol in postmenopausal women.

May protect against diabetes

Apples are low on the glycaemic index (GI) thanks to their fibre content. This, together with their high flavonoid content, may help to improve insulin sensitivity, which is important both for weight management and preventing diabetes.

May prevent obesity

Animal studies have shown that pectin extracted from apples may help regulate the gut microbiome (beneficial gut bacteria), which in turn may help prevent obesity and other inflammatory disorders. Studies on humans also look promising, but more research is needed.

May protect against heart disease

Apples are rich in polyphenols, protective plant compounds, one of which is a flavonoid called quercetin. Research by the American Journal for Clinical Nutrition found that those with higher quercetin levels (mainly through eating apples) had a lower risk of several chronic diseases including heart disease and even asthma.

May be beneficial for bone health

Fruit and vegetable intake is thought to be associated with greater bone density and improved bone health. Findings from a study on healthy women suggested apples, in particular, may minimise the amount of calcium lost from the body and hence improve bone strength.

COULD EATING APPLES HAVE ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS?

Apples, along with fruits including peaches, avocados and blueberries contain natural chemicals called salicylates. Some people are sensitive to these compounds and may experience an allergic reaction, including skin rash and swelling. Some consumers, who are concerned about pesticides, may opt for organically grown apples.

OVERALL, ARE APPLES GOOD FOR YOU?

Yes, there is some truth in the 'apple a day keeps the doctor away' proverb. Apples are naturally high in fibre, low on the glycaemic index and rich in protective plant compounds. Eating apples regularly will have a host of health benefits, from lowering cholesterol levels, helping to protect against obesity and chronic disease, and improving bone strength.

Vegan apple cake

Bake this dairy-free apple cake with almonds to fill your cake tin.

SERVES 8 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 1 hr 20 mins **EASY** **V**

150g dairy-free spread, melted, plus extra for the tin
300ml oat milk
1 tbsp lemon juice
350g self-raising flour, plus 1 tbsp to coat the apples
100g caster sugar
100g light brown soft sugar
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp almond extract
300g Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and chopped into 2cm cubes
2 tbsp flaked almonds

1 Rub some of the spread inside a 20cm deep cake tin and line with baking parchment. Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Pour the oat milk into a jug, add the lemon juice and leave to stand for 5 mins at room temperature.

2 Put the flour, both sugars and the baking powder in a large bowl, pour over the thickened oat milk mixture and the almond extract, then add the 150g spread and 1/2 tsp salt. Beat everything together using an electric whisk. Tip the apples into a second large bowl, sprinkle over the extra 1 tbsp flour and toss to coat. Fold the apples through the cake batter using a spatula, then spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and sprinkle over the almonds.

3 Bake in the centre of the oven for 1 hr-1 hr 20 mins, or until golden and firm to the touch. Leave to cool for a few minutes in the tin. Serve warm, or turn out onto a wire rack and leave to cool completely. *Will keep in an airtight container for up to three days.*

GOOD TO KNOW vegan
PER SERVING 445 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 4g • carbs 67g • sugars 30g • fibre 3g • protein 6g • salt 1.2g

3 more ways with apples

Celery & apple salad

Put **200g bulgur wheat** in a large bowl and just cover with boiling water. Cover the bowl and leave for 30 mins to absorb the water. Meanwhile, separate the sticks from **1 bunch celery**, very finely slice it and roughly chop the leaves. Cut **1 Pink Lady® apple** into fine matchsticks and toss in most of the **juice from 1 lemon**. In a bowl, mix the remaining lemon juice with **4 tbsp olive oil** and some seasoning to make a dressing. Gently fluff up the bulgur with a fork. Mix the sliced celery and apple through the bulgur, followed by a handful of **toasted hazelnuts**, roughly chopped, **1 red chilli**, deseeded and chopped, a **large handful of pomegranate seeds** and a bunch of **parsley, mint and tarragon**, chopped. Drizzle over the dressing and toss everything together gently. Scatter with the celery leaves and serve.

PER SERVING (6) 229 kcals • fat 10g • saturates 1g • carbs 30g • sugars 5g fibre 2g • protein 4g • salt 0.1g

Herby roast pork with veg roasties & apple gravy

Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Cut the rind and fat off a 1¼**kg boneless pork leg** roasting joint and discard, so that you are left with a lean chunk of meat. Spread with **1 tbsp wholegrain mustard**, scatter with **2 tbsp chopped parsley** and **2 tbsp thyme**, **1 tsp chopped sage**, plus a few extra sprigs, and season with black pepper. Place **80g prosciutto slices** on top to protect the meat where the fat has been removed. Coat a large roasting tin with **4 sprays of oil** and put the pork in the centre. Surround with **3 carrots**, halved lengthways, **6 halved small potatoes**, **2 red onions**, cut into wedges, **12 garlic cloves** and **1 small celeriac**, peeled and cut into 12 wedges. Scatter with thyme sprigs, then spray again and cover with foil. Roast for 1 hr, then turn the heat up to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Uncover, spray again and roast for 20 mins more. Meanwhile, make the gravy. Mix **2 tbsp cornflour** with **600ml reduced-salt chicken stock** to make a wet paste, heat the stock in a pan, stir in the cornflour mixture and cook, stirring, until thickened. Add **1 diced Bramley apple** and cook for 5 mins until softened but still holding its shape. Remove the meat from the tin and pour any juices into the gravy. Spray the veg with oil and roast for 20 mins more (while the meat rests) to brown them. Serve with steamed **cabbage** and **peas**, and the apple gravy.

PER SERVING (6) 418 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 3g • carbs 30g • sugars 10g • fibre 7g • protein 50g • salt 1.4g

Apple & cinnamon porridge

Tip **85g porridge oats**, ½**tsp ground cinnamon** into a non-stick pan with 150ml water and **250ml soya milk**. Put the pan over a gentle heat, then once simmering, leave for 5 mins, stirring frequently (as soya milk tends to stick) until thickened. Meanwhile, coarsely grate **2 small apples**, including the skin, into a bowl, until you're just left with the cores. Serve the porridge with the apple, **15g raisins** and **7-8 walnut halves** on top. Stir through 4 tbsp soya milk to loosen and sprinkle over more cinnamon, if you like.

PER SERVING (2) 333 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 2g • carbs 43g • sugars 14g • fibre 6g • protein 11g • salt 0.1g

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When is the best time to drink coffee?

Can't do without your morning latte? You may want to rethink your routine after reading expert advice

words VICKY CHANDLER

We are a nation of coffee lovers – consuming approximately 98 million cups of it a day in the UK. It has become a huge part of people's morning ritual, providing daily structure and comfort.

But is your early morning cup affecting your health?

While multiple studies have found that moderate consumption of coffee is in fact good for your health, drinking your coffee at the wrong time of the day can wreak havoc on your energy and cortisol levels, and your general mood. So, we consulted with experts to figure out when the best time is for enjoying a cup.

The best time to drink your coffee

People respond differently to caffeine and there's no one-size-fits-all rule. But if you want to optimise that energy boost from your coffee, you should hold off a little bit longer before enjoying your first cup of the day and wait until mid-to-late morning instead.

There are two reasons why; first, regarding the impact of coffee on your cortisol levels and secondly, its effect on your blood sugar. The way it affects blood sugar levels depends on a variety of things, but research tends to point towards caffeine causing temporary spikes in blood glucose. This can be exacerbated by a breakfast that is heavy on carbohydrate and sugar.

Indulge in a protein-rich breakfast first, paired with some healthy fats, recommends sports nutritionist and founder of Lift Club, Beth Johnson. "Something like a two whole egg, two egg white omelette with veg and a cheese of your choice is great. Or if you prefer something slightly sweeter, a big bowl of Greek yogurt with berries and a good dollop of peanut butter."

The link between coffee and cortisol

The stress hormone cortisol is also affected by coffee, potentially disrupting the way it regulates blood pressure and controls your sleep cycle.

Having too little or too much cortisol can cause health problems. In the

Illustrations FREDDIE STEWART

morning, cortisol levels are already heightened thanks to your body's natural circadian rhythm. Throw a highly caffeinated drink into the mix and you risk of excessive stimulation, hence why some of us get the post-coffee jitters. But that's not the only time cortisol levels spike. Cortisol is generally heightened during periods of stress, too, and stimulates the same response within your body as caffeine does, so if you're already feeling stressed or anxious, it might be time to skip the caffeine, or reduce it.

Can caffeine affect weight loss?
Some researchers have found that drinking four cups of coffee a day can lead to moderate weight loss, while another study found that drinking coffee can increase your metabolic rate, to the extent that activity occurs in your brown adipose tissue (the fat that burns calories), which leads to fat burning and weight loss.

"For some people, caffeine can increase the body's ability to burn fat," says nutritionist Sophie Trotman. "For some people, coffee can act as an appetite suppressant, reducing the likelihood of overeating."

But, Trotman explains that we need to take this with a pinch of salt as it has its downsides, too, exacerbating anxiety, sugar cravings and impacting your sleep. All of which can lead to weight gain.

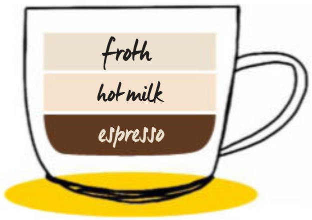
Finally, consider coffee's calorific content. While a large black coffee contains around 23kcal, and a skimmed milk flat white around 98kcal, calorie and sugar content can begin to rapidly increase with coffee intake. On high street coffee chain menus, some large, flavoured iced coffee drinks come in at around 400 calories, with a whopping 48.8g sugar. So, if weight loss is a goal for you, you might want to reconsider what style of coffee you're drinking.

So, when is the best time to have a coffee?
When it comes to the best time of the day to drink coffee, look at it as an energy-booster rather than a kickstarter. Consuming coffee before exercise can enhance performance, leading to more effective workouts. But don't drink it too late in the day, as you may struggle to fall asleep.

BARISTA-STYLE COFFEE RECIPES

Cappuccino

SERVES 1 **PREP** 2-3 mins **EASY**



18g ground espresso
(or 1 espresso pod)
150ml milk
cocoa powder, to serve (optional)

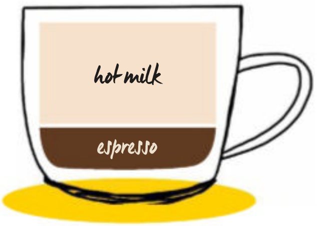
1 Make around 35ml espresso using a coffee machine and pour into the base of your cup.

2 Steam the milk with the steamer attachment so that it has around 4-6cm of foam on top. Hold the jug so that the spout is about 3-4cm above the cup and pour the milk in steadily. As the volume within the cup increases, bring the jug as close to the surface of the drink as possible while aiming to pour into the centre. Once the milk jug is almost touching the surface of the coffee, tilt the jug to speed up the rate of pour. The milk will hit the back of the cup and start folding in on itself to create a pattern on the top. Dust with a little cocoa powder, if you like

PER SERVING 98 kcals • fat 5g • saturates 3g • carbs 7g • sugars 6g • fibre none • protein 5g • salt 0.2g

Latte

SERVES 1 **PREP** 2-3 mins **EASY**



18g ground espresso or
1 espresso pod
250ml milk

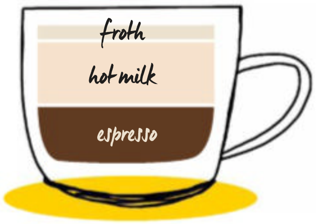
1 Make around 35ml espresso using your coffee machine and pour into the base of your cup.

2 Steam the milk with the steamer attachment so that it has around 2-3cm of foam on top. Hold the jug so that the spout is about 3-4cm above the cup and pour the milk in steadily. As the volume within the cup increases, bring the jug as close to the surface of the drink as possible while aiming to pour into the centre. Once the milk jug is almost touching the surface of the coffee, tilt to speed up the rate of pour.

PER SERVING 161 kcals • fat 9g • saturates 6g • carbs 11g • sugars 11g • fibre none • protein 8g • salt 0.3g

Flat white

SERVES 1 **PREP** 2-3 mins **EASY**



18g ground espresso or
1 espresso pod
100ml milk

1 Make around 35ml espresso using your coffee machine and pour into the base of your cup.

2 Steam the milk with the steamer attachment so that it has around 1-2cm of foam on top. Hold the jug so that the spout is about 3-4cm above the cup and pour the milk in steadily. As the volume within the cup increases, bring the jug as close to the surface of the drink as possible while aiming to pour into the centre. Once the milk jug is almost touching the surface of the coffee, tilt the jug to speed up the rate of pour.

PER SERVING 66 kcals • fat 4g • saturates 2g • carbs 5g • sugars 4g • fibre none • protein 3g • salt 0.2g

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At its best

Showcase new season's onions, celeriac and purple sprouting broccoli in must-try recipes from our food director **Cassie Best**

photographs LIAM DESBOIS

PLANET FRIENDLIER

Purple sprouting broccoli

Look out for purple sprouting broccoli from now until April – it has a long harvesting season and is very nutritious. A single portion provides half your daily requirement of carotenoids, plus high levels of folic acid and vitamins A and C.

Pasta & purple sprouting broccoli with anchovies, garlic & preserved lemon butter

This is a recipe for the anchovy lovers out there – the salty flavour works well with irony purple sprouting broccoli, and is lifted by the zing of lemon.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY**

8 anchovy fillets, finely chopped, plus 2 tbsp oil from the jar
100g butter
2 red onions, halved and thinly sliced
4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
3 small preserved lemons, seeds and flesh removed, skin finely chopped
400g trofie pasta (or another small pasta shape)
300g purple sprouting broccoli
1 lemon, juiced

For the chilli crumbs

2 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil
150g fresh breadcrumbs
1 lemon, zested
2 good pinches of dried chilli flakes

1 Boil the kettle. Drizzle the oil from the anchovy jar into a large frying pan, set over a medium heat. Add the anchovies and stir for a couple of minutes to break them up. Add the butter to the pan, swirling until it's melted and foaming, then stir in the onions. Sizzle gently for 10 mins until the onions are soft, then add the garlic and preserved lemon and stir for another minute.

2 Fill a large saucepan with kettle-hot water, season with salt and bring to the boil. Add the pasta, cook for 5 mins, then tip in the broccoli and cook for another 5 mins, or until the pasta is cooked but still has a little bite. Scoop out a mugful of pasta water and set it aside, then drain the pasta and broccoli in a colander.

3 While the pasta cooks, heat the oil for the chilli crumbs in a frying pan and tip in the breadcrumbs. Stir regularly until the crumbs are golden and crispy, then add the lemon zest and chilli flakes.

4 Tip the pasta and broccoli into the anchovy sauce and add a good splash of the reserved pasta water and a squeeze of lemon. Cook for a few minutes, stirring, until it's silky smooth and coats the pasta. Check and adjust the seasoning if necessary. Serve the pasta scattered with the crispy chilli crumbs.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • fibre • vit c • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 785 kcals • fat 33g • saturates 15g • carbs 97g • sugars 8g • fibre 11g • protein 20g • salt 1.74g

Celeriac

Closely related to celery, celeriac differs in that the edible part is its swollen root, and it has a unique flavour – a cross between celery, fennel and aniseed. Celeriac works well roasted and served with other root veg, in soups and stews. It also makes a great alternative to mashed potato.

Creamy celeriac, mustard & ham hock soup

This clever recipe uses stock made from the ham hock to boost the flavour. You'll also have plenty of ham left for making sandwiches or pies later in the week.

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 2 hrs 30 mins **EASY** ❄

- 1 unsmoked ham hock or gammon knuckle, weighing roughly 1.2kg
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil, plus extra to serve
- 1 large onion, halved and sliced
- 1 eating apple (we used Braeburn), cored and cut into chunks
- 1 large celeriac, washed and cut into chunks (or peeled if very dirty)
- 100g crème fraîche, plus extra to serve
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- crusty bread, to serve

1 Put the ham hock in a large pan with the bay leaves. Cover with water, bring to the boil and cook over a low-medium heat for 2 hrs, until the meat is very tender. Top up the pan with more water as needed while the ham cooks. Alternatively, cook the ham hock in a pressure cooker for 30 mins. Remove the ham and strain the stock into a jug. Remove and discard the rind, shred the meat and set aside until needed.

2 In the same pan, heat the oil over a medium heat, add the onion and cook for 10 mins, then add the apple and celeriac. Taste a little of the ham stock – if it is very salty, add water to dilute it. You'll need about 1 litre in total (freeze any that's left over for making more soup or risotto). Pour in the stock, bring to a simmer and cook for 20 mins or until the celeriac is very tender.

3 Add the crème fraîche and mustard to the soup, then blitz with a hand blender. Check and adjust the seasoning if necessary.

4 Warm the ham hock in a pan or the microwave. Serve the soup topped with a swirl of crème fraîche and a few drops of good olive oil, and a pile of ham hock – or make a ham and cheese toastie for dunking. *Leftover ham hock will keep frozen for up to two months.*

GOOD TO KNOW 2 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING (8) 304 kcals • fat 22g • saturates 9g • carbs 6g • sugars 5g • fibre 3g • protein 19g • salt 1.01g

Onions

Though used as the base in a huge variety of dishes, from curries to soups, salads and tarts, onions can also be the star. All varieties are easy to grow and they store well, too.

Caramelised onion, goat's cheese & za'atar galette

Make onions the star of the show with this moreish vegetarian tart.

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 30 mins
COOK 1 hr **MORE EFFORT** V ❄

3 tbsp olive oil
4 medium-large white onions, halved and thinly sliced
2 tbsp cider vinegar
2 tbsp light brown soft sugar
pinch of dried chilli flakes
1 tbsp za'atar
120g soft goat's cheese
4 thyme sprigs, leaves only

For the pastry

300g plain flour, plus a little extra for dusting
150g cold butter, cut into small pieces
1 medium egg, plus 1 egg yolk to glaze (freeze the white for another recipe)
1 tbsp za'atar

1 Start by making the pastry – you can do this a few days ahead, if you like. Tip the flour into a large bowl and add the butter and a good pinch of salt. Use your fingertips to rub the butter into the flour until you have a damp, sandy texture. Add the egg and 1 tbsp cold water, whisk together with a fork, then work the egg into the buttery flour crumbs until the pastry comes together, adding a splash more water if it seems dry. Don't overwork the pastry otherwise it will become tough. Shape the pastry into a disc, wrap in parchment or a beeswax cloth, then chill until you're ready to use it. *Will keep frozen for up to three months.*

2 Now make the filling. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a low-medium heat, add the sliced onions and a pinch of salt. Cook slowly, stirring now and then, until the onions are soft, about 10-15 mins. Add the vinegar, sugar and chilli and cook for another 5-10 mins until the onions are sticky and caramelised. Stir in 1 tbsp za'atar. Remove from the heat and leave to cool.

3 Remove the pastry from the fridge. If it is very firm leave it at room temperature for 30 mins to make rolling easier. Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 with a baking sheet on the middle shelf to warm up. Place a large piece of baking parchment (roughly the size of the baking sheet) on your work surface and dust with a little flour. Roll out the pastry on the parchment to a circle roughly 32cm in diameter and about the thickness of a £1 coin.

4 Spread the caramelised onions over the centre of the pastry, leaving a 1cm border around the edge. Break off small chunks of goat's cheese and scatter over the onions, then scatter over the thyme leaves too.

5 Fold the pastry edge inwards to create a border around the tart, leaving the onion filling exposed. Brush the pastry with egg yolk and sprinkle the remaining za'atar on the crust. Remove the tray from the oven and slide the sheet of parchment and the tart on top. Return to the oven and bake for 40 mins until golden brown. Leave to cool for 5-10 mins before serving.

GOOD TO KNOW 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING (8) 455 kcals • fat 26g • saturates 14g • carbs 43g • sugars 12g • fibre 5g • protein 10g • salt 0.63g

Shoot director LAURIE NEWMAN | Food stylist TROY WILLIS | Stylist TABITHA HAWKINS

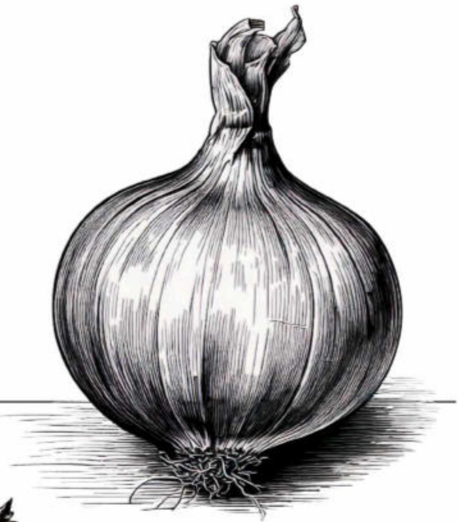
Homegrown

Now's the time to plant leeks and gooseberries, and preserve onions and celeriac while they're at their best

PRESERVE *the* SEASON

Onions

- Make a batch of classic caramelised onion chutney to use in tarts, sandwiches and to pop on your cheeseboard.
- Lightly pickle sliced red onions with lemon or lime juice, salt and sugar. They'll keep in a jar for up to a month and will bring sharpness to tacos, stews and salads.



Celeriac

- Replace carrots for celeriac in a carrot cake recipe to bring a warm, nutty flavour to the cake. Pop in a cake tin for a few days or freeze for up to three months.
- Mashed celeriac can be frozen in individual portions ready to serve alongside a stew or on top of a pie.

Purple sprouting broccoli

- Broccoli freezes best when it has been lightly blanched first. Boil the broccoli for 30 seconds, then plunge into cold water. Drain, put in a freezerproof container, and freeze for up to three months.
- Broccoli also freezes well when cooked into a dish – try it with a batch of cauliflower and broccoli cheese, or broccoli pasta bake.

WHAT TO GROW NOW

Emma Crawforth *of* BBC Gardeners' World *shares expert tips on what you can plant over winter to harvest later in the year.*

Leeks

- This is a hardy vegetable that will stand outside without protection in winter, however seeds sown this month need a little protection, so should be started on a cool (7-16C) windowsill. Sow 2cm deep into small pots of peat-free compost. Once the seedlings start to bend over, repot and then acclimatise them for planting outside in spring by putting the pots out in the daytime.

Gooseberries

- Gooseberries are easy-to-grow, valuable fruits, delicious harvested ripe off the bush. There's just time to buy and plant bare-root bushes now. Prepare a bed with rich, moist soil that drains well, avoiding frost pockets. Choose a plant you can keep pruned to a goblet shape, with a short stem and at least four branches. Plant at the same level as it was in the nursery. Firm in and water.

Spinach

- Spinach plants mature within 12 weeks of sowing, and by succession sowing (starting a few off every three weeks) you can grow a delicious crop until late in the year. In warmth, spinach can produce flowers and become bitter so February sowings have advantages. Sow into fertile, moist soil that allows water to drain away, in a sunny spot. A protective cloche is sensible.

Also in season chicory

Barney Desmazery shines the spotlight on an underused ingredient currently at its peak

February is the ideal time to eat chicory, also known as endive. This forced crop, grown in total darkness, develops pale white leaves with delicate yellow tips, creating a pleasantly mild bitterness and crisp texture. Chicory's cigar-like heads, about 12cm long, are a versatile winter ingredient. The flavour adds complexity to raw dishes, like salads featuring blue cheese or citrus. When cooked, chicory becomes deliciously caramelised and mellow, and pairs beautifully with rich or savoury ingredients. Use it to perfectly counterbalance sweet orchard fruit like apples and pears, creamy cheese, or fatty meats like pork or duck and the smokiness of bacon or smoked salmon.

Chicory season is from January to mid-March in the UK. Other members of the chicory family — like deep red, peppery radicchio or slender, speckled trevise — are also worth seeking out.

To prepare, trim off discoloured ends and remove any limp outer leaves. Cut lengthways for roasting or caramelising in a hot pan, or separate the leaves for a crisp addition to salads. A brushing of lemon juice helps stop the cut side from going brown if not using straightaway.

Quick ideas

- **Chicory, blue cheese, walnut & pear salad:** Toss **chicory leaves** with crumbled **blue cheese**, toasted **walnuts**, and thin slivers of **peeled pear**. Toss with a dressing of **Dijon mustard**, **honey**, **white wine vinegar**, and **olive oil**.

- **Pan-fried chicory**
Halve **chicory** lengthways, dust the cut sides generously with **icing sugar**. Fry in foaming **butter** until caramelised, then finish with a splash of **lemon juice** and sprinkling of **fresh thyme**.

Slow-roasted pork belly & chicory

SERVES 6 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 3½ hrs plus resting **EASY**

- 2kg pork belly piece, skin scored
- 4 tsp olive oil
- 6 heads chicory, red or white or both
- 3 garlic cloves, halved
- 4 thyme sprigs
- 300ml cider
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp brown sugar

1 Heat the oven to its highest temperature. Lay the pork on a board, skin-side up. Rub the skin with a little of the olive oil, then season with pepper and a sprinkling of coarse sea salt.

2 Lay the pork in a shallow roasting tin, skin-side up (the skin should be higher than the edge of the tin). Put in the oven and cook for 30 mins, then turn the oven down to 180C/160C fan/gas 4 and roast for 1 hr until the skin has crackled.

3 Meanwhile, halve the chicory lengthways. When the pork has had its time, remove from the oven and use a pair of tongs to lift it to a chopping board. Pour off any excess fat. Lay the chicory in the tray, cut-side up. Scatter over the garlic, tuck the thyme around the chicory and pour over the cider. Drizzle with the rest of the olive oil, blob on the mustard and sprinkle with sugar. Lay the pork on top and return to the oven for 2 hrs more.

4 Lift the pork off the chicory and transfer it to a board. Cover and rest for 20 mins. Carve into thick slices and serve with the chicory and the juices spooned over.

PER SERVING 751 kcals • protein 60g • carbs 10g • fat 52g • saturates 20g • fibre 1g • sugars 7g • salt 0.74g

Winter warmers

Discover how you can mix up your midweek meals this season with a little help from Bisto and Paxo

When it comes to a proper British roast, most of us would agree that gravy and stuffing are two of the non-negotiables. And whenever you and your loved ones are gathered round the table for this classic family dinner, you can always rely on the nation's favourites, Bisto gravy and Paxo stuffing, to keep everyone happy.

Of course, you don't have to wait for Sunday lunch to enjoy these storecupboard staples, as you can use them to create a whole host of simple, comforting dishes throughout the week, too. Read on to discover how you can incorporate them into your weeknight menu.

Only the best

Next time you want to top off your meal with a hearty helping of delicious gravy, you can be sure everyone will love Bisto Best, made with real meat juices. Available in a range of flavours, including beef, chicken, lamb, pork, vegetable and onion, these versatile gravies are ideal for mixing up and pouring over sausage and mash, or stirring into stews and casseroles. There are a variety of Bisto sauce mixes to choose from as well, including creamy cheese for your cauliflower cheese, mild parsley for your fish pies and rich pepper for your steaks.

Meanwhile, Paxo's mouthwatering stuffing mixes are great for adding texture and flavour to all sorts of dishes, from soups to sandwiches. Made with a tasty blend of herbs and seasonings, the traditional sage and onion flavour is always a crowd-pleaser, whether you add it to your pie fillings or crumble it into your pasta bakes. Plus, Paxo also offers a selection of breadcrumbs that are perfect for creating crunchy traybake toppings or irresistibly crispy coatings on meat, fish or tofu.

Want to try cooking with Bisto and Paxo? Here are a couple of speedy midweek recipes to get you started.

Paxo air fryer chicken tenders

SERVES 4 PREP 25 mins
COOK 20 mins EASY

- 50g plain flour
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 120g Paxo Super Crumb Coating
- 4 chicken breasts, cut into strips
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil

FOR THE CAESAR DIP

- 1 small garlic clove, grated
- ½ lemon, juiced
- ½ tsp Dijon mustard
- 3 anchovy fillets
- 100ml olive oil (including the oil from the anchovy tin)
- 25g parmesan, roughly chopped

1 Heat the air fryer to 200C and add the flour, eggs and Paxo Super Crumb Coating to three separate bowls.

2 Dunk each chicken strip into the flour, shaking off any excess, then the eggs, and finally the crumb coating. Place the tenders in a single layer in the air fryer and brush with the oil. Cook for 18-20 mins, turning halfway through, until the chicken is cooked through and crispy on the outside. You may need to do this in batches.

3 Meanwhile, make the dip by blitzing all the ingredients in a blender until smooth, then season to taste.

4 Serve the tenders on a platter with the dip on the side.

Bisto mushroom pie

SERVES 4-6 PREP 15 mins
COOK 45 mins EASY V

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 onions, halved and finely sliced
- 450g mixed mushrooms, finely sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, grated
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 100ml red wine
- 2½ tbsp Bisto Best Onion Gravy
- 1 x 400g can butter beans, drained
- 1 x 400g sheet ready-rolled puff pastry
- 2 tbsp plant-based milk

1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C/gas 6. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Fry the onions and mushrooms for 10-15 mins until the onions are cooked down and turning golden, the mushrooms are soft, and any water has evaporated.

2 Add the garlic, thyme and red wine and cook for 2 mins. Stir in the Bisto Best Onion Gravy and 300ml boiling water and simmer for 3 mins until the gravy has thickened and the granules have dissolved. Stir in the butter beans and season to taste, then pour the mixture into a medium baking dish.

3 Cut the pastry to the size of the dish and place over the top. Use any leftover pastry to create decorations for the top of the pie, then stick them down with a little of the milk. Brush the pie with the remaining milk and bake for 25-30 mins until the pastry is golden and the filling is bubbling.

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Between the sheets, p109

Make time for yourself

Mix a cocktail and serve the perfect steak on Valentine's Day, celebrate Bob Marley Week with **April Jackson's** Jamaican recipes or recreate an Irish stew from **Donal Skehan's** childhood. Plus, a classic French menu to impress

Be inspired and discover more at *goodfood.com/ feature/weekend*

weekend

Valentine's night

Rib-eye with cacio e pepe butter

Show someone you care by making a special supper

recipe HELENA BUSIAKIEWICZ *photograph* LIAM DESBOIS

Shoot director LAURIE NEWMAN | Food stylist TROY WILLIS | Sylist TABITHA HAWKINS

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins plus resting
COOK 30 mins **EASY** ❄ butter only

½ heaped tbsp black peppercorns
100g salted butter, softened
50g parmesan or pecorino, finely grated
1 tbsp vegetable oil
400g rib-eye steak
chunky chips and watercress, to serve

1 First, make the cacio e pepe butter. Heat a small, dry frying pan over medium heat and toast the peppercorns for 3-4 mins until aromatic. Crush to a powder using a pestle and mortar or spice grinder.

2 Put the butter and parmesan in a medium bowl, then add the freshly ground black pepper and a good pinch of salt. Beat together using a spatula. Spoon the cacio e pepe butter over the centre of a sheet of baking parchment, then roll up into a log and chill until needed. *Will keep frozen for up to two months.*

3 Drizzle the oil over the steak and season well with salt. Heat a heavy based-frying pan or cast iron skillet over a high heat and sear the steak for 30 seconds. Flip over and sear for another 30 seconds-1 min, and continue flipping and searing until the steak has a deep brown crust and is cooked to your liking. As a guide, the steak will take about 4 mins in total for rare (it should read 50C on a meat thermometer), 5-6 mins for medium (60C) and 8-10 mins for well done (70C).

4 Towards the end of cooking, add 3-4 tbsp of the cacio e pepe butter to the pan, spooning it over the steaks during the final few minutes. Remove to a board or plate, pour over the buttery pan juices and leave to rest for 10 mins. Slice against the grain and serve with more cacio e pepe butter melted over the top and chunky chips and watercress on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW gluten free
PER SERVING 722 kcals • fat 60g • saturates 29g • carbs 0.5g • sugars 0.3g • fibre 0.3g • protein 44g • salt 0.96g

Carnival time

Jamaica is hosting a carnival to mark Bob Marley Week, 1-6 February – the reggae star would have turned 80 this month. Food writer **April Jackson** transports us to the island with traditional dishes

photographs LIAM DESBOIS

Jamaican oxtail, p90

After taking part in BBC One's *The Apprentice* in 2015, April opened her Brixton restaurant Three Little Birds named after the Bob Marley song. She has since appeared on ITV's *This Morning* sharing recipes rooted in her Jamaican upbringing, as well as on her social media channels. @apriljjackson

Jamaican fried dumplings, p90

Jamaican oxtail

This is a dish with roots in resilience and resourcefulness, originating from the working-class communities that made the most of inexpensive cuts of meat. Traditionally slow-cooked, the oxtail becomes tender, falling off the bone, with its rich flavour enhanced by herbs and spices.

SERVES 4-6 **PREP** 10 mins plus overnight marinating
COOK 2 hrs 30 mins-3 hrs **EASY**

2 onions, roughly chopped
2 spring onions, roughly sliced
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 tbsp ginger, finely chopped
12g thyme sprigs, leaves picked
90ml soy sauce
1kg oxtail (ask your butcher to cut into 1-inch thick chunks)
3 tbsp cornflour
2 tbsp sunflower oil
2 scotch bonnet peppers (add more if you prefer more heat)

To serve

cooked white rice, rice and peas or Jamaican fried dumplings (see below)

1 Tip the onions, spring onions, garlic, ginger, thyme leaves, soy sauce, a large pinch of salt and 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper into a bowl. Mix well and add the oxtail, turning to coat. Chill overnight, or for at least 12 hrs.
2 When you're ready to cook, remove the oxtail from the marinade (reserving the marinade), put on a plate and dust lightly with the cornflour. Heat the oil in a large, deep saucepan or casserole dish and sear each piece of oxtail on both sides, around 2-3 mins each side, working in batches. Set the oxtail aside on a plate, then pour the reserved marinade into the saucepan and cook for 2-3 mins, scraping the bottom with a wooden spoon to release any browned bits.
3 Return the oxtail to the pan, then add enough water to just cover the meat (around 800ml should suffice). Mix in the scotch bonnets, then bring to boil. Cover and cook on low for 2 hrs 30 mins-3 hrs until the meat falls off the bone. Season to taste and serve with cooked white rice, rice and peas or fried dumplings (below).

GOOD TO KNOW iron
PER SERVING (6) 386 kcals • fat 21g • saturates 8g • carbs 14g • sugars 6g • fibre 2g • protein 35g • salt 2.72g

April's tip

If you can't get your hands on oxtail, I have found that this recipe also works with short rib, which is a cheaper cut of meat, too.

Jamaican fried dumplings

These dumplings are a cherished staple; perfectly golden with a slightly crispy exterior and doughy centre with a hint of sweetness. My aunt used to make the best fried dumplings. On Saturdays, I would hover over her Dutch pot as they bobbed up and down in the oil, generously offering to "help" cook so that I could devour them before they even got to the dinner table.

MAKES 12 **PREP** 5 mins plus resting
COOK 20 mins **EASY V**

260g self-raising flour, plus extra for dusting
8g salt
30g caster sugar
5g baking powder
vegetable oil, for shaping and frying

1 Dust a baking tray with flour. Mix all the dry ingredients in a bowl, then slowly pour in 150ml water, stirring until a dough forms. Rub a little oil over your hands, then break off bits of the dough and roll into golf-sized balls. Set aside on the prepared tray to rest for 20 mins.
2 Put a deep, large saucepan over a medium heat and pour in enough oil so that the dumplings will be submerged (and no more than two-thirds full). Heat the oil to 170C, or until a pinch of the dough sizzles when dropped in. Fry the dumplings for 6 mins, turning halfway. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on a plate lined with kitchen paper. Serve hot. Try serving with any meat stew.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan
PER SERVING 134 kcals • fat 4g • saturates 0.4g • carbs 19g • sugars 3g • fibre 1g • protein 2g • salt 0.96g

April's tip

Don't reheat the dumplings in the microwave, otherwise they'll lose their crispy texture.

Jamaican ginger cake

This is a rich, moist cake known for its warm, spiced flavour and dark, caramel-like colour. Rooted in Jamaica's colonial history, where British and African culinary influences mingled, it originally became popular for its use of ginger, molasses, and dark sugar – ingredients that thrived on the island. Originally baked in hearth ovens, the cake became a symbol of home comfort and celebration.

SERVES 8-10 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 1 hr 20 mins **EASY V**

120g unsalted butter, softened, plus a little extra for the tin
285g plain flour
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 tsp baking powder
2 tsp mixed spice
1 tbsp ground ginger
200g light brown soft sugar
2 eggs
2 tsp vanilla extract
80ml stem ginger syrup (from a jar of stem ginger), plus extra to glaze
50ml honey
110ml coconut milk

1 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Butter and line a 900g (2lb) loaf tin with baking parchment. Mix the flour, bicarb, baking powder, mixed spice, ginger and 1/2 tsp fine salt in a bowl.
2 Tip the butter and sugar into a separate bowl, and beat together using an electric whisk, until smooth and fluffy, around 3-5 mins. Add the eggs, vanilla, stem ginger syrup, honey and coconut milk, and beat until evenly mixed.
3 Tip in the dry ingredients and gently fold the batter until no streaks of flour remain, taking care not to over-mix. Pour the batter into the prepared tin and bake on the middle shelf of the oven for 45-55 mins, until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Remove and brush over a little stem ginger syrup. Leave in the tin until completely cooled, then cut into slices to serve. *Will keep for up to a week in an airtight container.*

PER SERVING (10) 367 kcals • fat 13g • saturates 8g • carbs 56g • sugars 25g • fibre 1g • protein 5g • salt 0.49g

Shoot director LAURIE NEWMAN | Food stylist JESSICA RANSOM | Stylist MAX ROBINSON
April Jackson portait DAVE BENETT/GETTY IMAGES ENTERTAINMENT

My favourite dish

Donal Skehan's Irish stew

The pop-star-turned-food-writer shares fond memories including the recipe that most reminds him of childhood

My favourite dish that takes me back to my roots is a gorgeous Irish stew. I hated potatoes growing up – I think it was because potatoes were so prevalent. My version has potatoes in, but they're cobbled on top so they crisp up, rather than collapsing in the stew and going a bit anaemic. It's all about the layers.

My dad, in a very unglamorous way, would spread lashings of butter on sliced pan (bread) and use it to mop up the juices. It's probably the most unceremonious way of eating an Irish stew, but it is also the best.

I'm not a chef, I don't come from a restaurant background. I grew up watching my mum cook and Delia Smith on TV. My grandmother was a fantastic cook too, and my aunt trained at Ballymaloe cookery school and she's a food stylist, so I was surrounded by great cooks.

I started out working in a music TV station writing showbiz gossip, but I was very bored, so I started writing a food blog on the side. I was also in a band – we actually went number one twice. We supported JLS and performed at the O2, but I always knew that my true love was food. I remember going to a signing in Ireland – I was on the phone dictating edits for a cookbook, and the rest of the band were like, 'Why is he writing a cookbook? We're obviously going to take over the world with our amazing pop songs!'

The pop world was very fickle. A manager in Ireland took a disliking to us, and our sights set on the UK music industry were put to bed very quickly. The food world is much nicer!

I came from the original food blogging world. I've always put recipes out there and got instant feedback. I once did a one-pot pasta that got 10 million views on YouTube, but the comments were awful – I got death threats from Italians! I'm sort of proud of them for protecting their pasta – they're so passionate about it.

Over the years, my cookbooks have become sort of autobiographical, because they always fit a stage of life, and my latest book, *Home Kitchen*, was born out of the fact that we had just found our forever home (I hate saying that as it sounds so twee!), and I wanted to write something that would speak to other families.

We have two young kids – they're four and six – so our kitchen works differently than it did 10 years ago. The recipes that I rely on form the essence of what family life is for us. I like to add little pops of vibrancy to recipes – things like harissa paste, and fennel seeds dry-fried in a pan – to bring a little life.

I've always had such a great love of travel and other cuisines, so I always try and weave them into my recipes. We lived in LA for nearly five years in a little neighbourhood called Eagle Rock. It was so exciting from a food perspective. There were so many diverse restaurants, you could get anything you wanted. There was a Thai breakfast place, and you'd get these beautiful big bowls of rice porridge, Chinese doughnuts and Vietnamese coffee with condensed milk. That's the thing I miss most about living there.

I haven't travelled so much the last few years, not just because of Covid, but also because of family life and the kids needing a bit more structure in the week. It's not as easy to jump on a flight. So I have leaned in very heavily to the sort of recipes that I know are functional for family life. I'd love to tell you that my life allows for fancy food, but ultimately, it is spag bol!

My guilty pleasure is something that I don't think has made it to the UK yet – it's called a spice bag. It is practically Ireland's new national dish! It is a Chinese-Irish concoction of a takeaway classic where they mix together deep-fried chips, crispy shredded chicken, onions, peppers, five-spice seasoning and chilli. It's ridiculous.

I won an award for my last cookbook – the event was cancelled as it was during Covid – so I had a bottle of champagne, a spice bag and sat with my award for the night. That was me living my best life.

Angie's Irish stew

Angie looked after my Dad when he was growing up, and when I first started going to school, she used to walk me home and give me lunch which was regularly Irish stew. Her Irish stew is legendary in the Skehan family, with my Dad's five siblings and my 11 cousins all having been brought up on it. Angie always knew how to feed an army of hungry mouths, so I hope this version of her recipe does it justice.

SERVES 6 **PREP** 25 mins
COOK 2 hrs **EASY**

- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1kg lamb shoulder, trimmed and cut into 2.5cm chunks
- 2 onions, roughly chopped
- 3 celery stalks, trimmed and sliced
- 4 large carrots, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 litre beef or lamb stock
- 900g potatoes, peeled and cut into 1cm slices
- knob of butter
- sliced white bread, to serve

1 Place a large, flameproof casserole pot over a high heat, add 1 tbsp of the oil and brown the lamb pieces in two batches. Remove and set aside on a plate. Reduce the heat to medium-high, add another tablespoon of oil and fry the onions, celery and carrots for 4-6 mins or until the onions have softened.

2 Heat the oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3. Return the meat to the pot, along with the bay leaf and stock, season with sea salt and ground black pepper and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat and push the slices of potato down into and across the top of the stew, dot with a little butter and give it a final season of sea salt and ground black pepper. Cover and place in the oven to cook for about 1 hr 30 mins or until the meat is tender, then remove the lid and cook for a further 10 mins until the potatoes have coloured.

3 You can serve the stew straight away or leave it covered overnight in the fridge for the flavours to develop, then reheat. Serve in deep bowls with slices of white bread to soak up the liquid.

GOOD TO KNOW fibre • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 541 kcals • fat 31g • saturates 13g • carbs 26g • sugars 7g • fibre 6g • protein 36g • salt 0.43g

Recipe extracted from Donal's website, *donalskehan.com*, where you'll find more of his recipes, food blogs and cooking videos.

To listen to a longer chat with Donal, tune in to the Good Food podcast – listen at *goodfood.com/podcast*, or wherever you get your podcasts.

Easy weekend bakes

Spend some time in the kitchen with a baking project from **Jane Dunn** of Jane's Patisserie

photographs ELLIS PARRINDER

Bourbon biscuit cheesecake

Bourbon biscuits are utterly iconic, and they make the best cheesecake. Using the biscuits as the base and side, then filling the middle with a silky, no-bake chocolate cheesecake filling is just delicious on top of delicious, and I cannot get enough.

SERVES 12-15 **PREP** 14 mins plus 5-6 hrs chilling **NO COOK**
EASY V

300g bourbon biscuits
85g unsalted butter, melted
For the cheesecake
15-20 bourbon biscuits
200g milk chocolate
500g full-fat soft cheese
75g icing sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
300ml double cream
To decorate
150ml double cream
2 tbsp icing sugar
biscuit crumbs
chocolate curls

1 Blitz the biscuits to a fine crumb in a food processor, or crush in a bowl with the end of a rolling pin. Add the melted butter and mix together. Press into the base of a deep 20cm springform cake tin.
2 For the cheesecake, press the whole biscuits into the biscuit base around the edge of the cake tin, standing vertical. Melt the milk chocolate in a heatproof bowl in the microwave in short bursts until smooth. (Or, do this over a pan of simmering water, ensuring the bowl doesn't touch the water.)
3 In a large bowl, whisk the soft cheese, icing sugar and vanilla extract together. Add the melted milk chocolate and whisk to combine. Finally, add the double cream and whip again until thickened (or, whip the cream separately and fold through). Pour the filling mixture into the tin, inside the ring of biscuits, and smooth the surface. Chill for 5-6 hrs, or preferably overnight, until set.
4 Once set, remove the cheesecake from the tin. To decorate, whip the cream and icing sugar together in a large bowl. Transfer to a piping bag fitted with the piping nozzle of your choice, then pipe dollops around the top edge of the cheesecake. Decorate with biscuit crumbs and chocolate curls. *Will keep chilled for up to three days.*

PER SERVING 537 kcals • fat 40g • saturates 25g • carbs 38g • sugars 24g • fibre 1g • protein 5g • salt 0.4g

Jane's tips

- You can use other biscuits, such as custard creams, and leave out the chocolate in the cheesecake mixture.
- Try swapping the milk chocolate for dark chocolate if you want a richer taste.

Jane trained at Ashburton Chefs Academy and has since attracted a loyal following of over 2 million across social media. She's baked on *This Morning* and *James Martin's Saturday Morning*, and her first book, *Jane's Patisserie*, is the fastest-selling baking book of all time. Jane also regularly appears at the Good Food Show, demonstrating her quick and easy bakes. @janespatisserie

BOURBON

Cookie dough bars, p98

Tiramisu cupcakes, p98

Cookie dough bars

When baking something cookie-related, it's always a common joke that the cookie dough is better raw. So, I thought making a cookie dough bar would solve all of my cravings. This cookie dough is gloriously full of chocolate chips and topped with a thick chocolate ganache, so it just gets better. It's an easy treat to throw together and enjoy with friends and family.

MAKES 16 **PREP** 25 mins plus at least 4 hrs setting **NO COOK EASY V**

125g unsalted butter, at room temperature
125g light brown soft sugar
397g can condensed milk
2 tsp vanilla extract
400g plain flour (see tip)
200g chocolate chips of choice

For the topping
150g milk chocolate
150g dark chocolate
150g double cream

1 Line a 23cm square baking tin with baking parchment. In a bowl, mix the butter and sugar together to combine. Add the condensed milk and vanilla extract, and mix again. Add the flour, ½ tsp sea salt and the chocolate chips, and mix again. Press the cookie dough into the bottom of the lined tin in an even layer.

2 For the topping, tip the milk and dark chocolate and double cream into a heatproof bowl. Heat in the microwave on low in 30-second bursts, stirring well between each interval until smooth. (Or, do this over a pan of simmering water, ensuring the bowl doesn't touch the water.) Pour this over the cookie dough, then chill in the fridge for at least 4 hrs, or preferably overnight, until set. Slice and enjoy. *Will keep chilled in an airtight container for up to four days.*

PER SERVING 471 kcals • fat 24g • saturates 14g • carbs 57g • sugars 37g • fibre 2g • protein 6g • salt 0.2g

Jane's tips

It is recommended to heat the flour before using in a no-bake recipe to reduce the risk of salmonella. Tip the flour onto a baking tray in an even layer and bake at 200C/180C fan/gas 6 for 5 mins, then cool completely before using.

Tiramisu cupcakes

Tiramisu is a classic, world-famous dessert, and I am absolutely in love with it. I wanted to have fun and experiment by merging two delicious bakes: tiramisu and cupcakes. These have a brown sugar coffee base with a tiramisu soak, plus a light mascarpone coffee frosting that I just want to devour with a spoon.

MAKES 12 **PREP** 40 mins plus 1 hr cooling **COOK** 20-22 mins **EASY V**

2 tsp instant coffee granules (see tip)
200g unsalted butter, at room temperature
200g light brown soft sugar
4 eggs
200g self-raising flour
1 tsp vanilla extract

For the syrup
1 tsp instant coffee granules
50g caster sugar
25ml coffee liqueur (optional, see tip)

For the frosting and decoration
1 tsp instant coffee granules
200g mascarpone
100g icing sugar
100ml double cream
25ml coffee liqueur
cocoa powder, for dusting
chocolate-coated coffee beans, to decorate (optional)

1 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4 and put 12 paper baking cups on a baking tray (or use a cupcake tin lined with regular paper cases). Dissolve the instant coffee in 2 tsp boiling water and leave to cool.

2 In a large bowl, beat the butter and brown sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, flour, cooled coffee and vanilla extract, and mix to combine. Divide the mixture evenly between the 12 cases and bake for 20-22 mins, or until a skewer inserted into a cupcake comes out clean (to bake in an air fryer, see tip).

3 While the cupcakes are baking, make the syrup. Put the instant coffee, caster sugar, 35ml boiling water and the liqueur, if using, in a bowl and stir to combine until the coffee and sugar have dissolved. Remove the cupcakes from the oven and carefully spoon over the syrup. Leave to cool completely.

4 For the frosting, dissolve the instant coffee in 1 tsp boiling water and leave to cool. Put the mascarpone in a bowl with the icing sugar and double cream, and whisk until thickened. Add the liqueur and coffee, and whisk again. Transfer to a piping bag fitted with the piping nozzle of your choice, and pipe the frosting onto the cooled cupcakes. Dust lightly with cocoa powder and decorate with chocolate-coated coffee beans, if you like. *Will keep chilled in an airtight container for up to three days.*

PER SERVING 451 kcals • fat 28g • saturates 17g • carbs 44g • sugars 31g • fibre 1g • protein 5g • salt 0.3g

Jane's tips

- Instead of instant coffee, you can use espresso from a coffee machine, if you have one.
- For alcohol-free cupcakes, simply leave out the coffee liqueur.
- You can also bake the cupcakes in an air fryer at 160C for 16-20 mins.

Recipes extracted from *Jane's Patisserie: Easy Favourites* by Jane Dunn (£22, Ebury Press) and not retested by us. Photographs by Ellis Parrinder.

Bistro hits

Impress friends with this easier-than-it-looks French-style menu

recipes BARNEY DESMAZERY
photographs HANNAH TAYLOR-EDDINGTON

Comté gougères, p100

Comté gougères

Filling the gougères with the optional comté crèmeux is what transforms them from a snack or drinks nibble to a starter.

MAKES 20 **PREP** 30 mins
COOK 50 mins **MORE EFFORT**

100ml milk
50g butter
125g plain flour
4 eggs
150g comté, grated
For the filling (optional)
35g butter
20g plain flour
100ml whole milk
100ml double cream
200g comté, grated, plus extra finely grated comté to serve

1 Heat the oven to 220/200C fan/gas 8. Put the milk, 100ml water and the butter in a medium pan over a low heat and warm until the butter has melted and the liquid is simmering. Stir in the flour and continue to cook, stirring, until the mixture comes away cleanly from the side of the pan. Transfer to a bowl and whisk in the eggs, one at a time, then beat in the cheese and some seasoning.
2 Spoon the mixture into a piping bag, snip off the end and pipe about 20 rounds over two baking trays lined with baking parchment. Use a finger or fork dipped in water to gently press down any peaks. Bake for 20 mins, or until the gougères are puffed up, deep golden and crisp. Leave to cool.
3 If you're making the filling, melt the butter in a pan over a medium-low heat. Whisk in the flour to form a sandy paste. Slowly whisk in the milk and cream, and continue to cook until the mixture thickens. Stir in the cheese to melt, season, then remove from the heat and cool completely. Once cool, transfer to a second piping bag. Snip off the end.
4 Using a skewer, poke holes into the bottoms of the gougères that are big enough to fit the end of the piping bag. Pipe in the filling, then arrange four on each plate and scatter over more grated cheese.

PER GOUGÈRE 170 kcals • fat 13g • saturates 8g • carbs 6g • sugars 1g • fibre 0.3g • protein 7g • salt 0.29g

Moules marinière

A classic moules marinière is a very simple dish made with just five ingredients, so it's a good crowd-pleaser when entertaining.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

2kg mussels, cleaned and debearded
25g butter
2 shallots, finely sliced
250ml dry white wine
handful of flat-leaf parsley, chopped

1 Rinse the mussels under cold running water, discarding any that are cracked or open and won't close when tapped sharply on the side of the sink. Drain well. Melt the butter in a large, deep pan that has a lid over a medium heat and cook the shallots with a little salt for 3-4 mins until softened.
2 Turn up the heat and tip in the mussels, then pour in the wine, cover and cook for 4-5 mins, giving the pan an occasional shake until all the mussels have opened. Scatter over the parsley and season with a little black pepper, then turn everything over using a large serving spoon. Divide the mussels between four bowls and spoon over the cooking liquid. Serve with the cheat's frites and aïoli (see recipes, right) on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW iron • gluten free
PER SERVING 225 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 4g • carbs 1g • sugars 1g • fibre 0.4 • protein 25g • salt 1.53g

tip

Cheat's frites

- To cook in an air fryer, heat the air fryer to 200C. Put **500g frozen fries** in the air-fryer basket and shake into a single layer. Drizzle over a little **sunflower oil** and toss to coat. Cook for 10 mins, then turn over and cook for 10 mins more until crisp and golden. Season with salt and serve.
- To cook in the oven, drizzle **1 tbsp sunflower oil** in a shallow roasting tray and heat in the oven at 220C/200C fan/gas 8. Carefully scatter **500g frozen fries** over the tray and turn over to evenly coat in the hot oil. Bake for 15 mins, then turn over and bake for 10-15mins more until golden. Season with salt and serve.

Easy aïoli

Crush **2 large garlic cloves** into a paste using a pestle and mortar or the back of a knife, then mix with **100ml shop-bought mayonnaise** and **1 tbsp lemon juice**.

Gâteau basque

Get ahead for your dinner party by preparing this dessert up to two days ahead.

SERVES 8-10 **PREP** 30 mins plus 1 hr chilling and cooling
COOK 50 mins **MORE EFFORT** **V**

- 250g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 140g cold butter, diced, plus extra softened butter for the tin
- 100g golden caster sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

For the pastry cream and filling

- 400ml whole milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 4 egg yolks (freeze the whites to use in another recipe), plus 1 egg, beaten, to glaze
- 100g golden caster sugar
- 40g cornflour
- 25g butter
- 100g cherry jam (optional)

1 Combine the flour, baking powder and a pinch of salt in a large bowl. Rub in the cold butter using your fingertips until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar, egg and vanilla, and knead together until a dough forms. Divide into two equal portions, shape into discs, wrap and chill for at least 1 hr. *Will keep chilled for up to 24 hours.*

2 To make the pastry cream, heat the milk and vanilla in a saucepan until just simmering. Whisk the egg yolks, sugar and cornflour together in a heatproof bowl until pale and smooth, then slowly pour in the hot milk mixture, whisking continuously. Pour the mixture back into the pan and cook over a medium heat for 4-5 mins, stirring continuously until thickened. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter until smooth. Cover with a disc of baking parchment, ensuring it's touching the surface of the cream, to prevent a skin from forming. Leave to cool.

3 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4 and butter a 22cm round tart tin. Roll out one of the pastry discs on a lightly floured surface until it's large enough to line the base and side of the tin, then gently press it into the tin, leaving any excess overhanging the rim. Spread the jam over the base, if using, then beat the cooled pastry cream until smooth and carefully spread this over the jam layer (or the plain base). Roll out the second pastry disc as before, then gently lay it on top of the pastry cream, pressing the edges together to seal. Trim off the excess pastry and use a fork to crimp the edges. Brush over the beaten egg and press a fork into the surface to create a crosshatch pattern, if you like.

4 Bake for 40-45 mins, or until the pastry is golden brown. Cool completely in the tin before removing to a serving plate. Slice and serve at room temperature. *Will keep chilled for up to two days.*

PER SERVING (10) 362 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 9g • carbs 47g • sugars 27g • fibre 1g • protein 6g • salt 0.53g

Shoot director FREDDIE STEWART | Food stylist JESSICA MCINTOSH | Stylist AGATHÉ GITS

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A taste of Korea

Take your tastebuds on a trip around the East Asian peninsula with traditional dishes *recipes* DA-HAE WEST
photographs HANNAH TAYLOR-EDDINGTON

Bibimbap

Use up your leftovers in this dish that translates as 'mixed rice'. Switch up the veg with whatever you've got in the fridge.

SERVES 1 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY V**

1 chestnut mushroom, finely sliced
½ courgette, halved and finely sliced
¼ carrot, cut into thick matchsticks
40g beansprouts
30g spinach
¼ tsp sesame oil, plus extra to serve
½ tsp sesame seeds, plus extra to serve
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 egg
150g cooked sushi rice

For the sauce
2 tbsp gochujang (Korean red pepper paste)
1 tsp sesame seeds
1 tsp caster sugar
½ tsp sesame oil

1 Mix the sauce ingredients together in a small bowl along with 1 tbsp water and set aside.

2 Put the sliced mushroom, courgette, carrot and beansprouts on a heatproof plate. Put a small heatproof bowl or ramekin upside down in the middle of a medium lidded pan. Add enough water to come halfway up the ramekin and bring to the boil. Carefully put the plate of vegetables on top of the ramekin and put a lid on the pan. Steam the vegetables for 3 mins.

3 Meanwhile, put the spinach in a bowl and pour boiling water over the top. Stir to wilt the leaves, then drain and rinse under cold water. Squeeze any excess water from the spinach, then mix in a bowl with the sesame oil, a pinch of salt and the sesame seeds. Set aside.

4 Heat the vegetable oil in a frying pan over a high heat. Crack in the egg and fry to your liking.

5 Fill a bowl with the rice. Top with the fried egg, then use tongs to add the steamed vegetables around it. Serve topped with the bibimbap sauce, a little extra sesame oil and sesame seeds. Mix everything together before eating. *Any leftover bibimbap sauce will keep chilled for up to five days.*

PER SERVING 587 kcals • fat 25g • saturates 5g • carbs 61g • sugars 12g • fibre 6g • protein 26g • salt 1.79g

Shoot directors LAURIE NEWMAN, JORDAN EDMONDS-MOORE | Food stylist JESSICA RANSOM | Stylist FAYE WEARS

Kimchi jjigae

Make this spicy, warming dish using pork belly and mature kimchi for maximum flavour.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY**

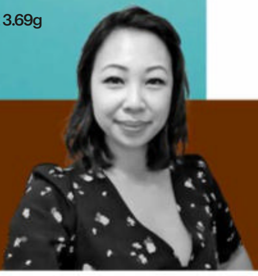
- 400g mature kimchi
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- ¼ small onion, finely sliced
- 200g pork belly, finely sliced
- 1½ tsp gochugaru (Korean red pepper flakes)
- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 150g firm tofu, drained
- 2 spring onions, cut into thin strips or julienne

1 Drain the kimchi in a sieve over a measuring jug (you'll also need about 100ml brine, so top up with more from the jar if needed). Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a high heat and fry the drained kimchi, onion and pork belly for 5 mins. Stir in the gochugaru and sugar, then fry for another 2 mins. Pour in 800ml water and the reserved kimchi brine, then bring to the boil. Simmer, uncovered, over a high heat for 15 mins.

2 Slice the tofu into 5cm squares that are about 1cm thick, then arrange these over the kimchi jjigae. Cover the pan with a lid and cook for 3-4 mins, or until the tofu is heated through. Scatter over the spring onions and serve.

PER SERVING 452 kcals • fat 31g • saturates 9g • carbs 10g • sugars 7g • fibre 4g • protein 31g • salt 3.69g

Da-Hae West is a Korean cookery teacher and author of *Eat Korean*. She has a wealth of experience promoting Korean food, closely working with the Korean Cultural Centre and Korean Tourism Organisation, as well as using her expertise on TV productions, including Gizzi Erskine's *Seoul Food* and John Torode's *Korean Food Tour*. @dahaewest



Kimbap

Adapt these rice rolls with almost any ingredient you like – we've used seafood sticks and hot dogs, but spicy pork or tuna mayo work well, too.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 45 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 carrot, cut into thin matchsticks
- 2 eggs
- 100g danmuji (Korean pickled daikon), or use gherkins or cucumber
- 60g seafood sticks, sliced into thin lengths
- 2 hot dogs, sliced lengthwise into quarters
- 6 gim or nori seaweed sheets

For the spinach

- 100g baby spinach
- 1 tsp sesame oil, plus extra for brushing
- ½ tsp sesame seeds, plus extra for sprinkling

For the rice

- 500g cooked sushi rice
- 1½ tsp sesame oil
- 2 tsp sesame seeds

1 First, prepare the spinach. Put the spinach in a heatproof bowl and pour over boiling water from the kettle, pushing the leaves under the water using a spoon to make sure they all wilt. Drain, then rinse under cold running water and squeeze out any excess liquid. Return the spinach to the bowl and mix in the sesame oil, a pinch of salt and the sesame seeds. Set aside.

2 Heat half the vegetable oil in a frying pan over a medium heat and fry the carrots for 2 mins until slightly softened. Remove to a plate and set aside.

3 Wipe the pan clean and heat the remaining oil over a high heat. Crack the eggs into a bowl and lightly whisk, then pour into the pan and swirl the pan to coat the base. Cook briefly until just set, then transfer the omelette to a chopping board and slice into strips, about ½cm thick. Put all the filling ingredients – the danmuji, seafood sticks, hot dogs, carrots, sliced omelette and spinach – on the same tray. Mix all the ingredients for the rice with ½ tsp salt in a large bowl.

4 Lay a seaweed sheet shiny-side down on a board and spread a quarter of the rice over three-quarters of the sheet in an even layer, leaving the top quarter of the sheet bare. Cut another seaweed sheet in half and lay this across the middle of the rice. (This will form the base layer for all the fillings.) Arrange a few pinches of each of the fillings across the length of that seaweed sheet. Lift the bottom of the larger seaweed sheet up and over the fillings, then tightly roll up, tucking everything in as you go. At the end of the sheet, add a few grains of rice across the top to act as a glue to seal. Lightly brush with sesame oil and sprinkle with sesame seeds, then repeat to make the remaining rolls.

5 Slice into 1cm-thick circles using a sharp knife – if the knife starts to stick, wipe it with a piece of kitchen paper and sesame oil to create neat slices. Trim the edges to neaten.

PER SERVING 308 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 2g • carbs 38g • sugars 3g • fibre 5g • protein 11g • salt 1.53g

Raise a glass

Make a citrussy rum cocktail and check out our favourite bottles to add to your shopping list this month

recipe SAMUEL GOLDSMITH *photograph* CHELSEA BLOXSOME

Between the sheets

Here's a variation on the classic sidecar cocktail, with tropical notes from the addition of rum. Flame the orange peel for an extra-special touch.

SERVES 1 **PREP** 5 mins
EASY

25ml white rum
25ml cognac
25ml triple sec
1 tsp lemon juice
ice
orange peel, to garnish

Pour the rum, cognac, triple sec and lemon juice into a cocktail shaker along with a handful of ice. Shake well, then strain into a glass (a Nick & Nora style glass is ideal). Garnish with orange peel before serving.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • gluten free
PER SERVING 174 kcals • fat none • saturates none • carbs none • sugars none • fibre none • protein none • salt 0.01g

tip

This is a fabulous aperitif but if you prefer a longer drink, add some ginger beer.

Best buys

OUR TOP PICKS FOR FEBRUARY

GIN

PAPA SALT COASTAL GIN

Australian botanicals come through in this citrussy gin with a salty edge from oyster shells – try it in a dry martini. **£42.50, 42.8% ABV, 70cl, Available from Harvey Nichols and Master of Malt**

SPIRIT

YUZU DISTILLATE

Strong flavours are key for London-based Diistil, as seen in their Black Tea, Soy Sauce or Jalapeño spirits. We're fans of the Yuzu – sweet but zesty. Use in a simple sour or Tom Collins cocktail in place of gin. **£42, 40% ABV, 70cl, available from *diistil.com***

NO-LO BEER

PROPER JOB IPA 0.5%

Brewed with Cascade, Willamette and Chinook hops, this is the first no-lo beer from the St Austell brewer with the same crisp, pineapple/citrus flavour. **£1.75 per 500ml bottle, available from Morrisons**

BEER

FIVE POINTS RAILWAY PORTER

This London-style porter is one of the first brewed by Five Points. Made with 100% British ingredients, it has aromas of dark, bitter chocolate and roasted coffee. **6 x 330ml bottles, £14. Available from *fivepointsbrewing.co.uk***

Shoot director RACHEL BAYLY | Food stylist JESSICA MCINTOSH | Stylist HANNAH WILKINSON

on sale 20 February

goodFOOD coming next month

Make Sundays special

Mushroom jalfrezi pie

- *Spring greens chicken stew*
- *Spicy nduja lasagne*
- *Lemon & dill rainbow trout*

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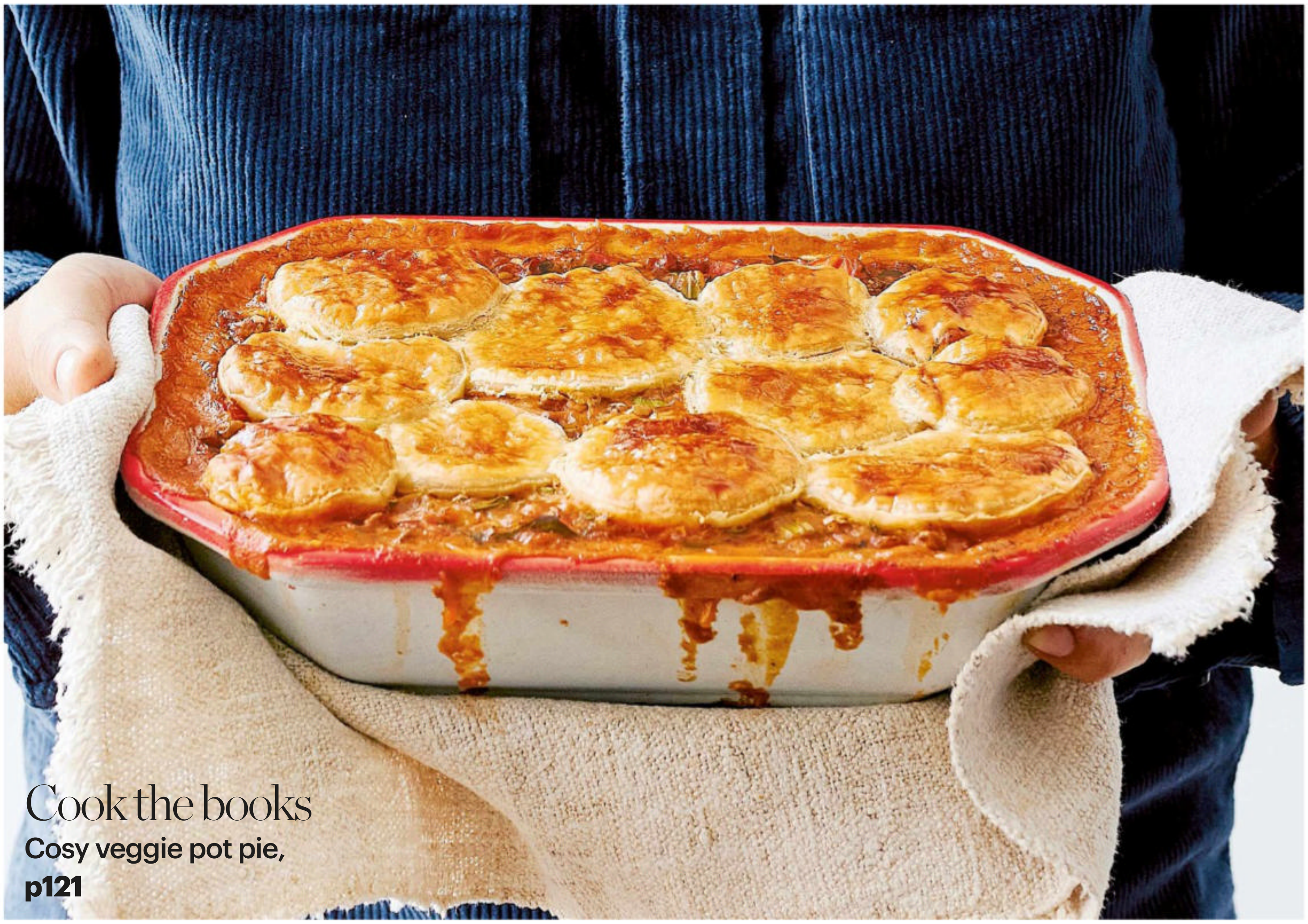
IN *the* KNOW

Sharpen your skills in the kitchen with our expert guides and make a note of the latest cookbooks and events to catch



Cook the books

Cosy veggie pot pie, p121

Out & about

Do a chocolate masterclass, p119

Next level

Beef hotpot, p114

LEARN SOMETHING *new*

What is masala?

Directly translated, masala means spice mix, but it is so much more. It tells a story, shaped by geography, local ingredients, and the dish its being used in. I've marvelled at the diversity of masalas across the Indian subcontinent, where even neighbouring households have their unique blends.

A masala can vary depending on what's cooking. The spices for a fish curry – often featuring fenugreek, mustard seeds, and turmeric – are worlds apart from those used for robust mutton dishes, which might include cumin and cloves. Even with goat and beef, the blends differ based on the richness and depth you're aiming to achieve.

Also, each region's cooking style and local spices shape the masalas, making it possible to identify their origin just by tasting them. In southern India, masalas often involve darker, roasted spices, giving them a deeply earthy profile which is a contrast against the lighter, more fragrant blends of Lucknow or the vibrant, punchy masalas of West Bengal.

Masala isn't limited to dry spice blends, either. In some areas, whole spices are soaked and ground into pastes, creating a fresh and intense base for curries and marinades. These pastes often use ingredients like garlic, ginger and chillies alongside the spices, adding another layer of complexity.

Masalas are deeply personal. They reflect the cook's hand, family traditions, and even the shopkeeper who blends the spices. No two masalas are ever alike. Even garam masala is versatile – some recipes call for it early in the cooking and others, a sprinkling at the end to preserve its aroma.

Tips for creating your own masala

- **Start with whole spices** Ingredients like cumin, coriander, cardamom, and cinnamon are excellent foundations.
- **Toast for depth** Lightly roasting spices releases their oils and enhances flavour.
- **Incorporate regional influences** Think of the region you're inspired by and select spices accordingly.
- **Store properly** Keep your blends in airtight containers, away from light and heat, to preserve their potency.

Aktar Islam is the first chef to earn two Michelin stars for Indian cuisine outside London with his flagship restaurant, Opheem. Aktar is known for innovating the classics, appearing on *The Great British Menu* and *MasterChef: The Professionals*. He also owns meal delivery service Aktar At Home. *@aktarislam_* *@opheemrestaurant* *@aktarathome*

WHOLE VS GROUND SPICES

Both whole and powdered spices have their place. Personally, I tend to work with whole spices, roasting and grinding them to unlock their full flavour. This process adds a depth and freshness that's hard to beat. However, certain staples like turmeric and chili powders are always on hand in my pantry. While we often make our own chilli powders from dried chillies, I find it practical to keep a variety of ready-made ones, as well as turmeric powder, which we seldom grind ourselves. Ultimately, it depends on the recipe, sometimes a mix of both works best.

Sharpen your Indian cookery skills with **Aktar Islam**, chef patron at Birmingham's only two-Michelin-starred restaurant Opheem

Micro skills

ROASTING SPICES

A lot of recipes say to toast whole spices in a dry hot pan. Though this is an easy way to brown them, there is more chance the spices will burn and cook unevenly, and when they burn they taste bitter and acrid. Instead, I like to scatter them on a tray and roast them at 115C which is the perfect temperature for them to release their natural oils and become more fragrant without burning. Don't forget that grinding spices (especially in an electric grinder) will also cause heat through friction that wakes up their flavour, too.

All about the base

The trio of onion, garlic and ginger is the backbone of Indian cooking, but how you prepare them depends on the dish. Ginger and garlic pastes are versatile and time-saving for everyday cooking. I keep both separately and combined in a 60:40 ginger-to-garlic ratio. For onions, I avoid pastes. Raw onion paste lacks the depth that caramelised onions bring – those golden edges are crucial for flavour. Whether diced, sliced, or puréed after caramelising, the prep shapes the dish's final taste and texture.

Ghee whiz

Made by heating butter to separate the milk solids, ghee delivers rich, nutty notes when the solids brown slightly. Use it as a cooking base, in marinades, and even to dress grilled dishes for added depth. By culturing butter with yogurt or infusing ghee with aromatics like black cumin or caramelised onions, it becomes a tool to create layers of flavour. Whether drizzled over pilafs or brushed onto roasted vegetables, ghee is essential for elevating Indian dishes to the next level.

THE ONE

We asked Aktar, 'What's the one...'

...dish you cook at home better than anyone else?

Jerk chicken, from a recipe my Bajan childhood friend and I perfected together. Based on a traditional recipe, it's aromatic with pimento, scotch bonnet, and thyme. The sweetness comes from basting with orange juice, creating a balance of bold, smoky, and citrussy flavours.

...mistake home cooks often make?

Not cleaning as they go. Keeping your space tidy while prepping and cooking makes the process more enjoyable and less stressful. It's a simple habit that eliminates a daunting pile of mess at the end, turning cooking into a more rewarding experience.

...piece of kitchen kit you couldn't cook without?

A good set of knives. Sharp, well-maintained knives make all the difference. Before putting them away, I always clean them and give a few strokes on the steel, ensuring they're ready to slice effortlessly next time.

...dish you judge a restaurant on?

I judge a restaurant by its bread. It must be homemade, not reheated, bought-in loaves. Bread reflects the chef's care and creativity. Dining out should showcase food made with love, labour, and soul, not mass-produced convenience. It's about experiencing something truly crafted, not just served.

...dessert you can't not order?

Bread and butter pudding. You don't see it as often these days, but it's timeless. Especially this time of year, it's the ultimate comfort – rich, warming, and nostalgic. For me, it's one of the best desserts you can enjoy.

...sustainable British ingredient we should be eating more of?

Wild venison. I cook it two ways in my restaurant on the same dish; I barbecue the loin and serve it rare and I braise the haunch and shred the meat, then roll it into a ball and crumb it.

Photographs DAVID COTSWORTH, ENVIROMANTIC, SYNERGEE/E+, ANNICK VANDERSCHELDEN PHOTOGRAPHY/MOMENT, ROB MELNYCHUK/PHOTODISC, WESTEND61/GETTY

Next level

BEEF HOTPOT

Try our comforting twist on the traditional one-pot meat stew to warm up those chilly evenings

recipe BARNEY DESMAZERY ***photograph*** LIAM DESBOIS

This beef hotpot takes the classic recipe to the next level with red wine marinated melt-in-the-mouth beef shin, stewed swede and carrots, and thinly sliced potatoes crisped to perfection. Where other hotpots can lack in flavour, this is based around a rich, hearty stew that would work on its own but is then adorned with an integrated side dish.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 30 mins plus at least 2 hrs marinating **COOK** 2 hrs 30 mins
MORE EFFORT

1kg beef shin, cut into large chunks (about 4-5cm)
300ml red wine
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 tbsp butter
2 onions, sliced
2 garlic cloves, chopped
4 carrots, cut into chunks
1 small swede (optional), peeled and cut into chunks
1 tbsp plain flour
1 tbsp tomato purée
500ml beef stock
bouquet garni (3 bay leaf, thyme and parsley stalks, tied together)

For the topping

1kg medium potatoes, thinly sliced to the thickness of a £1 coin
large sprig of thyme, leaves picked
75g butter, melted
thyme leaves, to serve (optional)

1 Tip the beef into a dish, season and pour over the wine. Cover and marinate in the fridge for at least 2 hrs, or overnight if possible. Once marinated, remove the beef and pat it dry. Reserve the wine for later.

2 Heat the oven to 170C/150C fan/gas 3. Put a large ovenproof frying pan or flameproof casserole dish over high heat and add half the oil. Brown the beef in batches, ensuring each piece has a good crust. Remove the browned beef and set aside. Pour in the rest of the oil and add the butter to the pan. Fry the sliced onions for 4-5 mins until lightly browned, then add the garlic and cook for 2 mins more. Add the carrots and swede, and cook for a further 2 mins.

3 Stir in the flour, cooking it for about 2 mins until it forms a sandy paste, then stir in the tomato purée and cook for 3 mins more. Gradually pour in the reserved red wine, stirring constantly until smooth. Add the beef stock and bouquet garni, then bring everything to a boil. Cover the casserole and bake for 1 hr 30 mins before giving everything a good stir.

4 While the stew is cooking tip the potatoes into a bowl and massage in a good pinch of salt then toss in the thyme leaves and butter and set aside until needed.

5 When the stew has cooked for 1 hr judge how much space the potatoes will have in the pan or dish. They need to come to the top to cook properly. If you think they'll sit halfway down, tip the stew into a shallower dish, then lay the the potatoes over so they are better exposed to the heat. Arrange in tight concentric circles and drizzle with any butter left in the bowl.

6 Turn the oven up to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Put the hotpot back in the oven and cook for a further 1 hr until the potatoes are crisp at the edges and cooked through. Turn on the grill, if your oven has one, to finish crisping the potatoes. Leave to stand for 5-10 mins, then serve the hotpot with thyme leaves scattered over and buttered greens on the side, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 883 kcals • fat 37g • saturates 16g • carbs 63g • sugars 13g • fibre 10g • protein 54g • salt 0.79g

Shoot director LAURIE NEWMAN | Food stylist TROY WILLIS | Stylist TABITHA HAWKINS

next month

FRENCH ONION SOUP

Make an unbeatable version with our next issue (on sale 20 February).

Our top tips

MAKE IT TENDER

Marinating the beef in red wine overnight adds depth and tenderness, infusing bold flavours before it even hits the pan.

ENRICH THE SAUCE

The reserved wine creates a rich sauce, balancing the beef's richness with acidity.

THE RIGHT CUT

Beef shin is ideal for slow cooking – it becomes incredibly tender and juicy after simmering in the rich sauce.

SLICED NOT DICED

Sliced onions give the stew more body and the potatoes a good base to sit on.

A TOUCH OF SWEETNESS

Adding chunks of swede lends subtle sweetness and extra depth to the beef and red wine sauce.

good FOOD HOLIDAYS

Discover the Iberian Peninsula

Take in the sights of Andalucia and the Lisbon coast

Save up to £200pp using a discount for Good Food readers!*

Highlights of Andalucia

Eight days/seven nights rom £1199pp* using code GF100
May to November 2025

On an unforgettable holiday, you'll discover this vibrant region of Spain while staying in the authentically Andalucían town of Loja. Surrounded by dramatic mountains and green valleys, it is known as Andalucía's heart and is the perfect base for day-trips to explore Seville, Córdoba and Granada, three of southern Spain's most remarkable cities.

Enjoy the whitewashed plazas and narrow, winding streets of Loja, and explore the medieval architecture of Granada, soaking up the atmosphere of the real Spain.

You'll also have plenty of free time to relax, sample local delicacies or enjoy more of what interests you with recommendations from your tour guide.

Holidays include flights, accommodation, transfers and expert-led guided tours.

Estoril & Lisbon Coast

Eight days/seven nights from £1109pp* using code GF100
March to September 2025

Embark on the ideal combination of beach holiday and city break on this guided group tour to the coastal towns outside of Lisbon.

Stay in the lovely resort towns of Cascais or Estoril, each located just half an hour away from the city.

From there, take a guided day-trip to Lisbon, where you'll learn about Portugal's remarkable maritime history at the Belem Tower and Monument to the Discoveries.

You'll also enjoy excursions to the magical Sintra Castle; the medieval, cobblestone towns of Óbidos and Alcobaça; and the traditional fishing village of Nazaré.

There will be plenty of free time to discover the Portuguese capital at your own pace; go shopping, explore the colourful streets of Alfama or try the famous pastel de nata.

Holidays include flights, accommodation, transfers and expert-led guided tours.

TO SEE THE FULL RANGE OF HOLIDAYS AVAILABLE

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TERMS & CONDITIONS *Offer valid for all new bookings made until 3 February 2025. Offer is £200pp off holidays of 14 nights or more using code GF200, £100pp off holidays of 7 to 13 nights using code GF100 and £30pp off holidays of 6 nights or fewer using code GF30. Flights available from London, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Solo holidays available on some tours. Offers are non-transferable, subject to availability, cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer and have no cash value. All deposits are non-refundable. **Good Food Show tickets Good Food (published by Immediate Media Company London Limited) will contact you after your holiday to arrange tickets for your chosen show (excludes Saturday entry). Please see Good Food's privacy policy at *policies.immediate.co.uk/privacy* for details of how your personal information may be used to make these arrangements.

Travel Department
Let's see more...

5 OF THE BEST FRYING PANS

Invest in a good non-stick pan, or opt for stainless steel to retain heat – our experts have tested a wide range to help you choose

words NATALIE BASS

Best non-stick

Ninja Foodi Zerostick 28cm frying pan

This is a serious pan with a generous size and depth, and its polished stainless steel exterior, sturdy riveted handle and manageable weight give it a professional feel. It retains heat very well, so much so that we had to lower the hob flame to stop our dishes from overcooking – making it energy efficient, too. Despite being non-stick, it's also metal-utensil safe, dishwasher-safe, scratch-resistant and oven-safe up to 260°C. **Available from Ninja (£54.99)**

Best multifunctional

Our Place Always Pan 2.0

Made popular by Instagram, this frying pan is as attractive as it is versatile. It has a handled steamer basket, which can also be used as a colander, and its domed lid is designed to lock in steam when needed (or release it when you don't). It's impressively lightweight, too, and our pancake mixture spread further than others on test – aided by the smooth non-stick coating. **Available from Our Place (£130)**

Best budget

Stellar Rocktanium 20cm non-stick frying pan

Delivering more than we expected for the price, this frying pan has a speckled, slightly textured non-stick coating and is relatively lightweight. We found it wasn't the fastest to heat up on test, and it was fairly slow to respond to changes in temperature – making it better suited to one-temperature cooking. Its non-stick surface worked well, though, and we achieved even browning when making an omelette and pancakes. **Available from Harts of Stur (£17.95)**

Best hybrid

HexClad Hybrid 20cm pan

This pan is built with HexClad's signature hybrid technology, merging stainless steel and non-stick, although the need to season it – albeit not every time – brings us into cast iron territory. It's sturdy and cooks well, though should only be heated at low to medium temperatures. This also means it takes a while to heat up. On the plus side, we found the handle stayed cool throughout the testing. **Available from HexClad (£129)**

Best stainless steel

Le Creuset signature stainless steel pans

If you're looking for an alternative to non-stick cookware, stainless steel offers durability and excellent heat retention. Le Creuset offers a range of sizes, all with curved sides and slim handles. The 28cm one we tested was the quickest to caramelise onions, producing rich, sticky results in just 35 minutes on a low heat. They're expensive, but as with most Le Creuset products, they're designed to last a lifetime. **Available from Le Creuset (from £139)**

HOW WE CONDUCT OUR REVIEWS

We test and research a range of products in each category to ensure every budget is represented. Products must meet criteria to be shortlisted, including nationwide availability through an online retailer. Shortlists for testing always include a minimum of 10 products. Test matrices have specified testing criteria, including sustainability, energy usage and packaging.

good FOOD HOLIDAYS

Taste your way around Puglia

Discover one of Italy's renowned culinary regions, with trips to vineyards, olive farms and bakeries

From £1,469pp*

2-7 April, 7-12 and 11-16 May, 24-29 September and 28 September-3 October 2025

Italy is known and loved worldwide for the quality of its food and wine. Puglia, a real gem of south-east Italy, stands out even in a country with such a strong culinary reputation.

This exciting six-day tour will take you to some of the best spots in Puglia to eat and drink, with trips to historic bakeries, olive farms and masserie – traditional stone farmhouses – surrounded by enchanting vineyards. You'll enjoy a range of memorable experiences, like dining at local restaurants, cooking and pasta-making classes, and olive-oil-tasting.

You'll visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sassi di Matera, with its ancient cave dwellings and rock churches, and Alberobello, where you'll see the iconic trulli – houses made of limestone boulders with pyramid roofs – as well as many other amazing sites. (See the website below for more information.)

Throughout the trip, you'll stay in comfortable hotels and B&Bs that allow you to fully immerse yourself in Apulian culture. You will stay in a cave hotel in Matera, your own traditional trullo in Alberobello, and in beautiful Bari, you'll be well placed to explore the city's charming old town, including the church of St Nicholas.

Your itinerary

Day 1 Arrive in Bari **Day 2** Sassi di Matera **Day 3** Alberobello, Altamura **Day 4** Locorotondo, Bari and Ostuni **Day 5** Bari **Day 6** Departure

What's included

- An Italian cookery masterclass and dinner
- A bakery tour and bread-tasting in Altamura
- Vineyard tour and wine-tasting in Locorotondo
- Olive oil-tasting and olive farm visit near Ostuni
- A bike tour of Bari, including a pasta-making class
- Two nights in an atmospheric cave hotel in Matera
- One night in a traditional trullo hotel in Alberobello
- Two nights' accommodation in Bari
- A bottle of local wine exclusively for our readers
- Breakfast each day
- All transfers in Italy
- Return flights
- The services of a bilingual guide throughout your trip

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TERMS & CONDITIONS *From price is per person, based on two sharing, subject to availability. Price and itinerary correct at time of print but may be subject to change. Single supplement £350. Deposit 20%. Local charges such as tourist tax may apply. Travel insurance is not included but required for most of our overseas trips and should be taken out at time of booking. Images used may not reflect your actual tour experience. Tour is operated by and subject to the booking conditions of TS Travel Ltd (ATOL bonded). **Good Food Show tickets: Good Food (published by Immediate Media Company London Limited) will contact you after your holiday to arrange tickets for your chosen show (excludes Saturday entry). Please see Good Food's privacy policy at *policies.immediate.co.uk/privacy* for details of how your personal information may be used to make these arrangements.

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TRIPSMITHS

GET OUT AND ABOUT

Learn the craft of making chocolate or pasta and take a stroll among the snowdrops in Cumbria

compiled by RACHEL GUNTER

Birmingham Lunar New Year celebrations 2025

1-2 February

Celebrate the lunar new year in the heart of Birmingham's Chinatown. Be treated to traditional Chinese performances, live music and dances, food stalls and a fireworks display.

Where: Birmingham Hippodrome

Tickets: Free, *birminghamhippodrome.com/calendar/chinese-new-year-2025*

Eataly cooking school

All year round

Get hands-on with the best of Italian cuisine in one of Eataly's year-round cooking classes. Choose from a range of skills – there's classic pasta, pizza, kids' baking and pasta-making, plus special themed classes.

Where: Bishopsgate, London

Tickets: All classes available to book at: *eataly.co.uk/cooking-school*

York's Chocolate Story tours and masterclasses

All year round

Enjoy delicious chocolaty treats on a guided tour of one of York's top attractions, or if you want to get creative, take part in one of their chocolate-making masterclasses.

Where: York's Chocolate Story, York

Tickets: All options available to book at: *yorkschocolatestory.com*

Snowdrop Weekends at Acorn Bank

1 February-16 March

Take a trip to these walled gardens in Cumbria (a National Trust site) over the half-term break. You'll be able to see the beautiful snowdrop displays in full bloom at this time of year.

Where: Penrith, Cumbria

Tickets: Adult £9, children £4.50 (free for National Trust members). For details, go to: *nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/lake-district/acorn-bank*

Secret Food Tours: Edinburgh

All year round

Enjoy traditional Scottish fare including authentic haggis, award-winning Lowland single malt whisky, treats, desserts, and cheeses while taking in this picturesque city. You can find other Secret Food Tours all over the world on their website (below).

Where: Edinburgh city centre

Tickets: Adult £89, children £79, *secretfoodtours.com/edinburgh/food-tours-edinburgh*

Make your own sweet treats at York's Chocolate Story

Photographs SIMON HADLEY, ESME MEI, ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

BOOKS *for* COOKS

Our resident reviewer Fiona Forman makes a hearty veg pie from *Pass the Plate* by **Carolina Gelen** and casts her eye over more new titles

photograph HAARALA HAMILTON

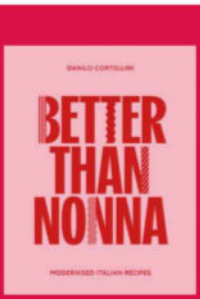
Everyday Comfort Cooking to Savour and Share
Pass the Plate
'Recipes that strike the perfect balance between comfort and excitement' Ixta Belfrage
Carolina Gelen

Despite winning a Jamie Oliver cooking contest at 16 in Transylvania, Romania, where she grew up, Carolina was discouraged from pursuing a career in food. In her new book, she explains, "Growing up in an Eastern European home after your parents suffered through communism, dictators and poverty, you're taught the way to escape that cycle is to go to university and get a white collar job… you're encouraged to become a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer or a computer programmer to make your family proud." Carolina did just that, and studied computer science at university, but hated it, so after a summer job in the US, she made the huge decision to emigrate there and work in restaurants.

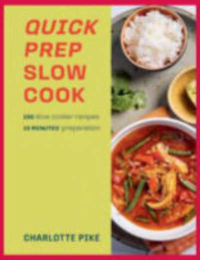
She then started posting her food on Instagram, got noticed by the New York Times and Food52, and became a contributor for both, all by the age of 25. She believes food unifies people and communities, "Even though my parents don't speak English, they understand the language of food, thus supporting the concept that food is a universal language, transcending cultures."

In the book, you'll find a unique blend of US and Eastern European dishes – sweet and spicy wings and brie mac and cheese (hello!), alongside butter noodles with melting onions and cabbage, and Hungarian pepper stew. The recipes are exactly the kind of food I like to cook – bold, colourful and easy.

Carolina stresses, "cooking should be an enjoyable experience, not some stressful task you always postpone", and with that in mind, all the recipes in her book are easy to achieve, with no hard-to-find ingredients. As I'm writing this, it's around two degrees outside, so I decided to make Carolina's veggie pot pie. I'm always looking for veggie dishes my two young children will actually eat and enjoy, and this one passed the test! As well as being simple to make, it's great for using up old veg – and there's something really satisfying about cutting out pastry rounds. It was delicious – the perfect comforting stew for a cold evening. I hope you enjoy it as much as we did.



***Better than Nonna* by Danilo Cortellini (£25, Meze Publishing)** Elevate your Italian cooking with this new book from *MasterChef: The Professionals* finalist Danilo Cortellini. He shares modern takes on dishes, from classics like carbonara and tiramisu with hazlenuts and salted caramel, to wild garlic, ricotta and lemon risotto, and a chapter of 'Nonna's untouchables' dedicated to dishes from his childhood that would make Nonna proud. Plus, master the basics with guides to making pasta and risotto.



***Quick Prep, Slow Cook* by Charlotte Pike (£16.99, Octopus Publishing)** My slow cooker is my most-used gadget in winter, but I find I make the same old dishes with it. If you're in the same boat, this new book from trained chef and food writer Charlotte Pike will give you lots of inspiration. All the dishes take just 10 minutes to prep, with warming veggie stews, braised meat, pasta dishes, a whole chapter of curries, and hearty puddings.

Cosy veggie pot pie

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 30 mins
COOK 50 mins **MORE EFFORT** **V**

For the filling

- 4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium brown onion, chopped
- 3 celery sticks, chopped
- 3 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 medium red pepper, chopped
- 2 tbsp fresh rosemary, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1½ tsp sweet paprika
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- 2 x 400g cans brown lentils, drained and rinsed
- 2 tbsp cornflour
- 250ml full-fat milk or unsweetened non-dairy milk
- 4 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped, plus extra to serve

For the pastry

- 1 egg or 1 tbsp unsweetened non-dairy milk, for brushing
- plain flour, for dusting
- ½ x 500g puff pastry block, thawed overnight in the fridge if frozen

1 Heat the oven to 200C/190C fan/gas 6. In a large flameproof casserole dish or heavy-based pot, heat the oil over a medium heat. Add the onion and a big pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft and translucent, 4-5 mins. Add the celery and carrots and cook, stirring, until the carrots are softened slightly, 6-8 mins. Add the red pepper and rosemary and cook, stirring, until the pepper is softened, 3-4 mins. Add the garlic, paprika, cumin and cayenne and cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant, 1-2 mins. Stir in the lentils.

2 Add the cornflour and use a wooden spoon to toss and coat the vegetables. Stirring constantly, add 250ml water, followed by the milk. Cook, stirring occasionally, until visibly thickened, 4-5 mins. Remove from the heat and stir in the parsley. Taste and adjust the salt as needed.

3 Carefully transfer the mixture to a 23-25.5cm cast-iron frying pan or a deep casserole dish.

4 To prepare the pastry, in a small bowl, whisk together the egg and 1 tbsp water to make an egg wash. If using non-dairy milk, simply add it to a small bowl.

5 Dust a work surface with flour. Working quickly to keep the pastry cold, roll it out into a sheet 5mm thick. Use a glass or round biscuit cutter to cut out as many rounds as you can in the dough. Place the dough rounds in an even layer on top of the vegetable filling, avoiding overlap as much as you can (a little is okay). Lightly brush the pastry rounds with the egg wash or non-dairy milk.

6 Bake until the pastry is puffed up, golden and firm, about 25 mins. Cool for 5 mins before serving.

7 Divide the pot pie among plates or bowls, top with more fresh parsley and serve.

GOOD TO KNOW fibre • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING (8) 301 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 6g • carbs 27g • sugars 6g • fibre 6g • protein 9g • salt 0.4g

Carolina's tip

This recipe uses celery, carrots and peppers, but you can make this pie out of any veg looking rough or going mushy in your kitchen. Broccoli stalks, half a cabbage, dry cauliflower florets and old courgettes are all good.

Recipe extracted from *Pass the Plate* by Carolina Gelen (£27, Ebury) and not retested by us. Photographs by Nico Schinco.

good FOOD HOLIDAYS

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8 included experiences

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- Guided tour, lunch and flamenco show in Salamanca
- Dinner at Quinta da Pacheca with a selection of their wines
- Traditional Portuguese folk music show
- Guided tour of charming Porto and visit to a port wine cellar

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8 included experiences

- Five guided tours including glorious Lyon, charming Beaune with wine-tasting, historic Vienne, splendid Arles and Avignon
- Three visits including the magnificent Ardèche Gorges, the remarkable Pont du Gard and beautiful Tournon

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planet-friendlier

Power up with pulses

GOOD FOR YOU AND THE PLANET

Mallika Basu is a food writer, commentator and author of two cookbooks *Miss Masala: Real Indian Cooking for Busy Living* and *Masala: Indian Cooking for Modern Living*. She writes an award-nominated newsletter called *In Good Taste* on food, people and planet, and has a sustainable food qualification from University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership.

Why you should get over your 'beans hesitancy' to improve your diet, navigate the cost-of-living crisis and fight climate change

words MALLIKA BASU

Dried beans, peas, and lentils don't always grab the spotlight, but they're true superstars for our health, the planet and our wallets.

They're so important for the environment and sustainable diets that the United Nations decreed 10 February World Pulses Day to celebrate them. The UN defines pulses as the dried edible seeds of leguminous plants (legumes) grown primarily for human consumption such as lentils, beans and dried peas. This excludes fresh vegetables like green peas and beans, crops cultivated for oil extraction (e.g. soybean and groundnuts) or for agricultural use (such as clover and alfalfa). Confusingly, the terms pulses and beans can often be used interchangeably.

These little seeds pack a mighty punch. They're a rich source of the plant-based protein we need to consume to reduce our reliance on meat. Pulses have the potential to contribute to carbon sequestration, where carbon dioxide is taken out of the air and trapped in soil. They improve the quality and fertility of soil by taking nitrogen from the air and fixing it into the ground. This is of immense environmental benefit reducing the current dependence of global farming systems on synthetic nitrogen fertilisers that are reliant on fossil fuels. These cause grave damage to the environment and nature, depleting soil over time.

Not only that, but pulses are also hardy crops that are self-fertilising and drought-resistant with long storecupboard life. They use water efficiently to grow – lentils need less than one tenth of water per kilogram than beef by the UN's estimations. Planted alongside other crops (intercropped), pulses maximise the nutrients in soil and increase biodiversity, the wealth of living organisms on and around farmland. They play a key role in agroecology, farming in tune with nature, and regenerative agriculture, designed to return soil and nature to its best health.

A force of nature for the planet, pulses are also powerhouses of nutrition and cost-effective to buy and cook. Many people around the world magic them into vibrant dishes for everyday and celebratory meals. From rice and peas across the Caribbean, the soup, broths and wraps of Latin America, to the dips and salads of the Middle East and the curried, sautéed and fermented dishes in south Asia, they form the mainstay of food culture, cultural foods and global cuisines.

> "People around the world magic them into vibrant dishes. From rice and peas in the Caribbean, to the dips and salads of the Middle East"

As nations became more industrialised, urbanised and wealthier, pulses historically fall out of fashion, replaced with more aspirational, expensive items like meat and fish. UK-grown varieties like fava beans, the dried version of broad beans, while perfectly delicious and nutritious for people, are exported to the Middle East for livestock feed. Bean hesitancy has set in, with people wary of their well-known digestive after-effects and not knowing how to cook and enjoy them. They can be difficult to digest because of the plant compounds lectins and oligosaccharides. Lectins are proteins that target sugars in the body, and high-lectin foods can cause gas, bloating, and cramping, while oligosaccharides are the fibre and complex carbohydrates in them.

The Eat-Lancet Commission's guideline for a planetary health diet advises we consume 50g of dried beans, lentils and peas per day. A global movement called Beans is How is also reminding people of the magic in beans and other pulses, and sugest we double how much of it we consume by 2028. Over 100 chefs, organisations and brands, schools and more, across 50 countries, have joined forces to put the magic of beans back on the menu. "Beans are not just for vegetarians – they're a great choice for anyone looking for a nutritious and sustainable food option that is kind to bodies, the planet, and our wallets," said Ali Morpeth, public health nutritionist and bean champion. ►

If you need a little convincing to find fresh love for dried pulses, here are six things to know that might help persuade you:

1

Nutrition powerhouses

Pulses are a rich source of proteins (21-25%), complex carbohydrates (60-65%), dietary fibre (10-20%) and micronutrients such as folate, thiamine, riboflavin, vitamin B6, niacin, iron, zinc, magnesium and potassium, according to Julie A Lovegrove, professor of nutrition at University of Reading in her paper titled 'The benefits and challenges associated with raising our daily pulses'. They are low in fat and have a low glycaemic index, which means they don't cause blood sugar levels to spike. They naturally contain all the essential amino acids for a complete protein, and combining them with grains can further enhance their goodness, says Morpeth. The soluble variety of dietary fibre found in pulses can aid digestive and bowel health, help lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease.

2

Gut health heroes

While they can be the butt of gassy jokes, beans are excellent for gut health. That gassiness and flatulence you feel is, in fact, your gut bacteria enjoying a feast in your stomach. Gas is the by-product of gut bacteria breaking down the oligosaccharides in beans and pulses. For those who experience discomfort, experts recommend introducing pulses slowly into the diet so the system can adjust. Soaking pulses, with a few changes of water, also helps. As a rule, the longer a dried bean is likely to take to cook, the more it would benefit from a soak. Ironically, the more we eat beans the higher the chances of more investment into plant breeding programmes to develop varieties that are comfortable to stomach.

> “When cooked, pulses are arguably the fastest of fast foods. A quick toss in heady flavours and they're a nutritious and quick meal”

3

Mental health champs

When gut bacteria are happily fed, they produce the right neurotransmitters for better mental health, too. Dr Radzman is leading a campaign called Broad n Mind to raise awareness of the role of broad beans in mental health. They are rich in levodopa (or L-DOPA), a compound that helps increase dopamine or the brain's “feel-good” chemical. She also highlighted that fermented beans like tempeh and doubanjiang (Chinese spicy fermented beans) are a great source of GABA, a relaxing neurotransmitter that can help with anxiety. Each type of bean comes with its own nutrition profile, so the best way to optimise their health benefits is to eat a variety of them.

4

Versatile, fast food

On their own, pulses may not seem the most exciting of ingredients, but paired with the right herbs, seasoning and spices they are sponges for flavour. They can

Photographs ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

also be used in many forms. Fava bean flour and gram flour, made of huskless little brown chickpeas, make excellent gluten-free bakes and pancakes, for instance. Lovegrove is spearheading a campaign called "Raising the Pulse", which incorporates pulses into staple foods like bread to increase their use. When cooked, pulses are arguably the fastest of fast foods. A quick toss in heady flavours and they're a nutritious and quick meal. There is little difference between the convenience offered by cans, packets and jars, except the ones in the latter can be seasoned and softer in texture. Dried beans offer the added flexibility of adjusting texture and taste.

5 Affordable, available and low-waste

Cooking pulses from scratch has the added benefit of being enormously cost-effective and handy, given their long shelf life. While it may seem like a chore to soak the beans overnight and then cook them, slow cookers and pressure cookers make it a breeze. A cook's tip from Ghanaian food writer Patti Sloley is to soak a cup of pulses with a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda, rinse and then cook with fresh water to speed things up. Once cooked, you can portion and freeze pulses. They are also readily available online, in supermarkets and corner shops. Look out for locally grown varieties to support local enterprise, soil and food security and revive historic favourites. Hodmedod's has been driving the movement in the UK bringing back varieties like carlin peas, which date back to medieval monks and had a lengthy hiatus from our grocery shelves.

6 The world at your fingertips

If school dinners and bland lentil suppers have left you underwhelmed with pulses, there is a whole world of inspiration from people who know how to season and serve them. The UK and Ireland's beloved baked beans, for instance, originated in Native American tribes. The recipes from cuisines around the world that centre beans in the diet are likely to use generations of traditional, indigenous and scientific knowledge to make them palatable and digestible. Mexico's Epazote herb, East Asia's kombu sea kelp and ginger, fennel, carom seeds and asafoetida in South Asia are all used to dispel gas and discomfort when cooking beans. They may well remove any lingering resistance you may feel towards pulses and beans, too.

Do you have 'bean hesitancy'?

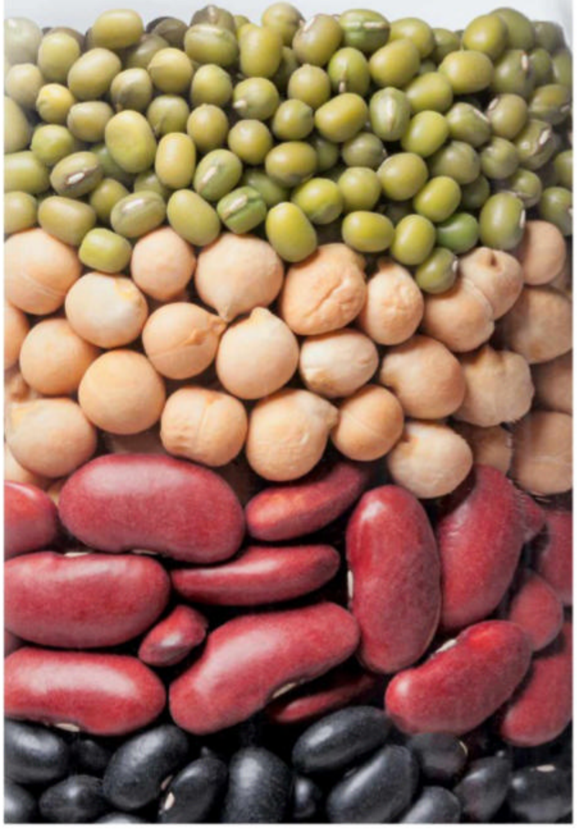
If digestive woes hold you back from bean love, you are not alone. Bean hesitancy describes the reluctance of some people to eat beans, which becomes "bean resistance" in more severe cases. Some reasons for this include:

Misconceptions
Misconceptions and misinformation abound about how to prepare and eat beans, which affect perceptions and understanding.

Difficulty cooking
Some people think beans are difficult or time-consuming to cook, especially when cooked from the dried versions.

Intolerance
Some varieties of legumes can cause digestive discomfort and pain, and in some cases, allergic reactions like itching and hives.

Hard-to-cook phenomenon
Some legumes are resistant to softening during cooking after lengthy storage, rendering them hard and unpalatable.



Turn over for recipes using pulses ▶

Try our recipes

Khichdi

Enjoy a classic Indian dhal known for its Ayurvedic properties, from food writer Rinku Dutt.

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 25 mins
COOK 45 mins **MORE EFFORT** **V**

- 1½ tbsp cumin seeds
- 250g moong dhal
- 250g medium or short grain rice (basmati is also fine)
- 1½ tsp ground turmeric
- 1 medium-sized tomato, cut into 1cm cubes
- 150g frozen peas
- ½ tsp asafoetida
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2½ tbsp ghee
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 dried red chilli
- 3 cardamom pods, seeds removed and crushed, husks discarded
- 1 tbsp grated ginger

1 Toast 1 tbsp of the cumin seeds in a small frying pan over a medium heat until the aromas are released. Leave to cool, then put in a coffee or spice grinder and grind to a fine powder. This will make about 4 tsp ground cumin, of which ½ tsp will be used at the end of the dish. *The remainder will keep in an airtight container for up to a week for use in another dish.*

2 Dry-toast the moong dhal in a frying pan over a medium heat for about 5 mins. Keep tossing the pan so the dhal does not burn. Take off the heat and leave to cool.

3 Gently wash the rice under cold water two to three times to remove the starch. Add the dry-roasted moong dhal to the rice and wash once again. Put both in a large ovenproof pan and fill with enough water to come 1½ inches above the rice mixture. Bring to a simmer over a medium heat. Spoon off any scum that forms on top of the water and discard it.

4 Stir in the ground turmeric and tomato, return to a simmer, then pour in 500ml water. Return to a rolling simmer, reduce the heat and simmer for a further 20 mins with the lid on. Check the dhal and rice are cooked – they should have merged together to form a porridge-like consistency. Add more water if necessary and simmer for longer. Once cooked, keep on a low heat and add the frozen peas, asafoetida, 1 tsp salt and the sugar. Stir well and keep on a gentle simmer.

5 Meanwhile, put a small frying pan over a medium heat. Add 2 tbsp of the ghee, the remaining cumin seeds, bay leaf, dried chilli and crushed cardamom seeds, and allow the aromas to release, taking care not to burn the spices, around 2-3 mins. Add the ginger and cook for 2 mins on a medium heat, stirring constantly so it doesn't stick. Stir the ginger and cumin mixture into the khichdi and simmer for a final 2 mins before removing from the heat. Spoon the last ½ tbsp ghee over the top and sprinkle with ½ tsp of the toasted and ground cumin seeds from step 1 (also known as bhaja moshla). Close the lid until ready to serve. Just before serving, stir well one more time. Serve with poppadoms or flatbreads and pickles or mango chutney and hardboiled eggs, if you like.

PER SERVING 263 kcals • fat 6g • saturates 3g • carbs 39g • sugars 3g • fibre 4g • protein 11g • salt 0.6g

Simple coconut & bean soup

Levi Roots shares a recipe that shows how something delicious can be made from mostly storecupboard ingredients.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY** **V** ❄

1 tbsp sunflower oil
½ bunch of spring onions, whites and greens separated and sliced
1 red pepper, diced
1 scotch bonnet chilli, deseeded and pounded to a paste
1 garlic clove, chopped
1 tsp dried thyme
1 tsp medium curry powder
1 tsp allspice
3 plum tomatoes, chopped
1 vegetable stock cube
410g can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
410g can pinto beans, rinsed and drained
410g can black-eyed beans, rinsed and drained
2 x 400g cans coconut milk
2 limes, juiced

1 Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Sizzle the spring onion whites, pepper, chilli paste and garlic for 5-8 mins until soft and fragrant. Add the thyme, curry powder and allspice, then cook for 1 min more. Stir in the tomatoes, then cook for 2 mins.
2 Crumble in the stock cube, then tip in all the beans and the coconut milk. Simmer for 10 mins. Turn off the heat and stir in most of the spring onion greens, the lime juice and some seasoning. Ladle into bowls and scatter with the remaining spring onions just before serving.

PER SERVING 581 kcals • fat 38g • saturates 28g • carbs 45g • sugars 14g • fibre 11g • protein 19g • salt 3.19g

Ful medames

Try this brilliant Egyptian dish from Mitshel Ibrahim, the head chef of London restaurant Ombra. Made using fava beans, it's mashed into a chunky purée along with garlic, lemon and tahini.

SERVES 2 as main or 4 as side
PREP 5 mins **COOK** 35 mins **EASY** **V**

400g can fava beans (available online) or broad beans
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
100ml olive oil
2 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp chilli flakes
2 large, ripe tomatoes, roughly chopped (or 200g can of chopped tomatoes, if tomatoes aren't in season)
½ lemon, juiced
2 tbsp tahini

1 Drain the beans and rinse. Fill the empty, clean can with water and pour into a saucepan with the beans. Bring them to the boil to warm through, then take them off the heat.
2 Meanwhile, in a separate medium frying pan, gently fry the onion and garlic in all but a few tablespoons of the olive oil for 5 mins, then add 2 tsp sea salt flakes, the cumin, chilli flakes and tomatoes. Drain the beans, reserving some of the cooking liquid. Add to the onion mixture and cook over a low heat for 30 mins, stirring often and adding some of the cooking liquid if it looks dry.
3 Using a potato masher, mash the beans with the remaining olive oil, lemon juice and tahini. The final consistency should be a chunky, soft purée. If it splits slightly, mix in a drop of cold water.

PER SERVING (4) 335 kcals • fat 30g • saturates 4g • carbs 8g • sugars 2g • fibre 4g • protein 6g • salt 3.1g

LONDON 4565 MI
FIJI 7375 MI
1707 MI
NEW YORK CITY 1203 MI
7482 MI
CHICAGO 1228
CANCUN 400
LAUDERDALE
TORTUGAS 70 MI
MIAMI 132 MI
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NCISCO 2550 mi
HABANA 105 MI
ASSAU 281 MI
NEW ORLEANS 630 MI
TAMPA 239 MI

Florida Keys

Travel the vibrant archipelago to experience the USA's southernmost towns

words LULU GRIMES

Travelling the lengths of the Florida Keys down 113 miles of road, hopping from island to island over 42 bridges is a trip of a lifetime. The Keys begin an hour's drive south of Miami and the road takes you all the way to mile marker '0' in Key West. It's a straight line so it's an easy drive with plenty of sightseeing opportunities to break it up. There are non-car options, including coaches, and if you extend the holiday, cycling is an option.

Key Largo

This is the first of the Florida Keys. On this island, you'll find the Everglades National Park to the west and John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park to the east with beaches, mangroves, forests and nature trails.

Key Largo's John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park covers about 70 nautical square miles. Scuba diving, snorkelling trips and glass-bottom boat tours of the living coral reef are available, or you can kayak, paddleboard and hike through mangroves (*floridastateparks.org*).

Eat conch fritters, little neck clams or a fried mahi reuben on rye at Mrs Mac's Kitchen on Overseas Highway. Sit at the bar for the full diner experience and try Islamorada Brewery beers (*mrsmacskitchen.com*).

Stay at Baker's Cay Resort. Taking up 15 acres on the 'sunset' side of the Keys. It boasts mangroves and trees peppered with tiny hidden beaches and a boat dock where we spotted manatees. Eat at Calusa the Creole-Caribbean restaurant with a lovely balcony; expect fish like yellowtail snapper and mahi. Breakfast includes tostadas, egg 'bennies' or fruit-loaded breakfast bowls. The resort avoids single-use plastics, using avocado stone straws, rice paper food wrappers, biodegradable corn starch cups and soft drinks in cans or glass bottles only. You are given refillable PATH water bottles on arrival and there are refill points (*bakerscayresort.com*).

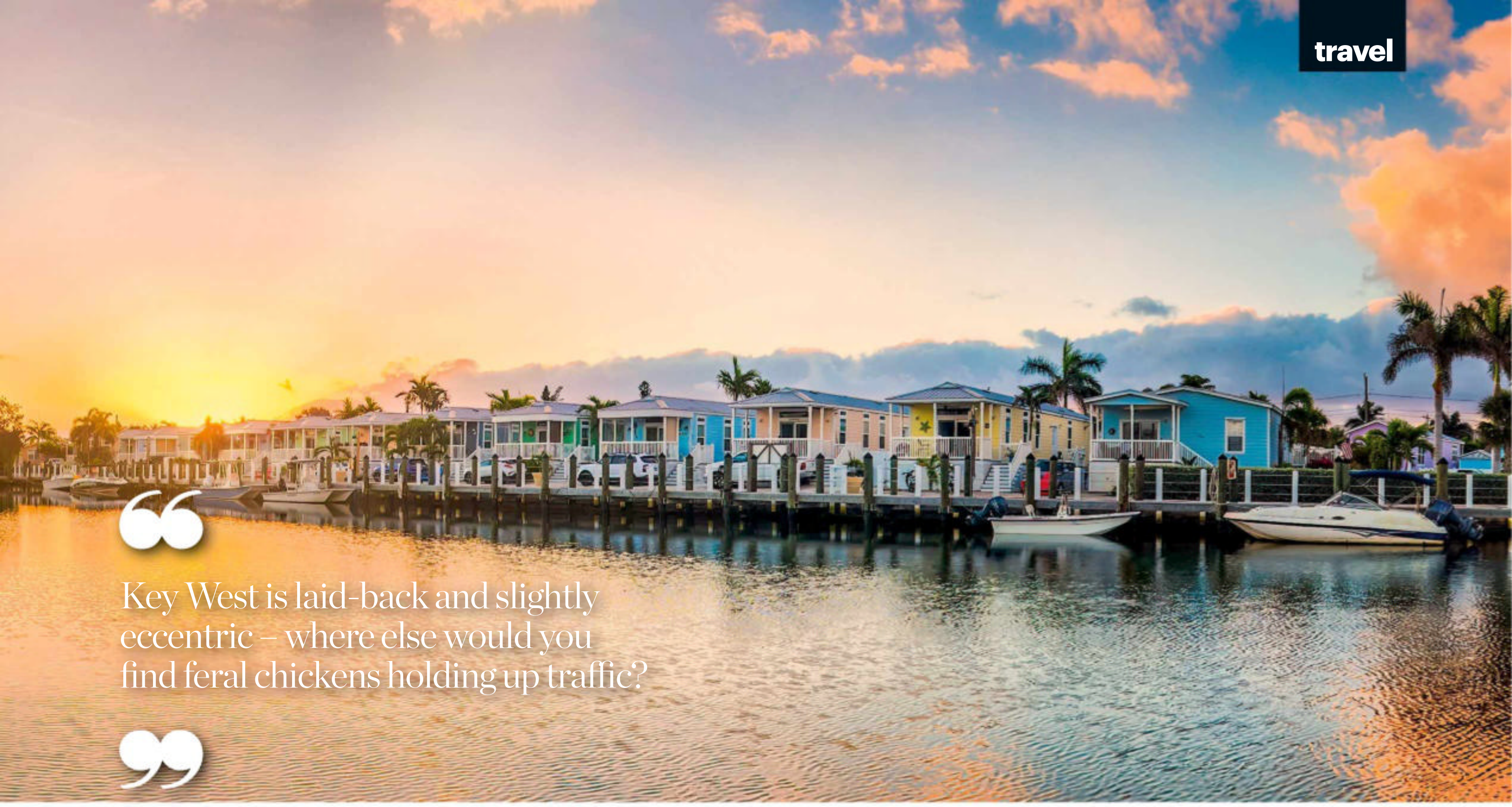
> “Hopping from island to island over 42 bridges is the trip of a lifetime”

Marathon, Upper Keys

Marathon is a 10-mile stretch of 13 islands including Vaca Key, Grassy Key and Fat Deer Key.

Cycle the Old Seven Mile Bridge (aka Old 7) to Pigeon Key. Bikes can be rented at Bike Marathon (*bikemarathonbikerentals.com*). Take a picnic or buy an ice cream on-site and sit at the end of the pier where there's plenty of wildlife to be seen. You can also swim and snorkel if you take your gear.

Keys Fisheries operates as one of the coast's biggest fish exporters, and you can sit in or take away, or adults can eat in the upstairs bar. Lobster reuben is the go-to dish and there are stone crab claws, chowders with lobster, crab or conch, and grouper, mahi, hogfish and snapper in buns. Look out for lionfish tacos as a special (*keysfisheries.com*).



> Key West is laid-back and slightly eccentric – where else would you find feral chickens holding up traffic?

Castaway is a buzzing joint with an extensive sushi menu. It's owned by John Mirabella, a fisherman and diver, and enthusiastic lionfish-eater. Try lionfish sashimi, nigiri or in a 'King of the Jungle' roll (*castawayfloridakeys.com*).

Stay at Grassy Flats – an oceanfront resort on the Atlantic side (sunrise) that strives to be sustainable, growing bananas, papaya and some veg and herbs, and using seaweed from the beach for compost. Family apartments with kitchens are available (*grassyflats.com*).

Big Pine Key

Patrick Garvey, owner of Grimal Grove, a two-acre fruit farm on Pine Key, has a mission to educate in a fun, flavour-packed visit that includes a tour and fruit tasting. There's an astonishing selection of trees including mango, guava and black sapote (that taste like chocolate). Breadfruit, a low-maintenance and high-yield fruit sequesters carbon very well and Garvey sends surplus to be made into limited-release Grimal Grove vodka by zero-waste Mutiny Island Vodka in St Croix (*grimalgrove.com*).

Cudjoe Key

Stop at The Square Grouper. Join the queue on the veranda and wait your turn to eat sautéed grouper sandwiches with shoestring fries and key lime tartar, seafood stew packed with shrimp, scallops and fish, and bread pudding with buttered rum sauce (*squaregrouperbarandgrill.com*).

Photographs GETTY IMAGES/ULTIMA GAINA/CRISTIANL

Key West

Laid-back and slightly eccentric, where else would you find feral chickens roaming and holding up the traffic? Key West is the southernmost city of the continental US. The old town streets are lined with enormous ancient banyan and kapok trees, strangler figs and different varieties of palm and have a quiet, lush look dotted with white wooden houses.

Take a dolphin-watching and snorkelling tour on SQUID, an electric-powered boat run by Honest Eco. Most of the crew have biology backgrounds and you'll learn about marine ecology, and coral and sponge gardens. Organic fruit and veg are on offer and the crew are helpful and engaging (*honesteco.org*).

Try a frozen key lime pie on a stick from Kermit's Key Lime Shop and potentially spot Kermit himself, resplendent in a lime green chef's outfit. Key limes are tart and floral but with a milder acidity than the limes we get in the UK, and the bottles of juice are a good take-home gift (*keylimeshop.com*).

Grab a takeaway café con leche and an egg and cheese Cuban sandwich at Cuban Coffee Queen on the waterfront. The coffee is roasted in Key Lime Square next to the café (*cubancoffeequeen.com*).

Enjoy exotic ice cream flavours including mamey, papaya, sour sop and guava at Flamingo Crossing on Duval Street. Everything is made in-house.

At the quieter end of old town, Winslow's Bungalows has guest rooms split out across different old houses linked by stone paths and palm trees. It's walkable to most of Key West's attractions (*keywesthistoricinns.com*).

GET THERE

Return flights LHR-MIA with BA, car hire, two nights at Baker's Cay, Key Largo, in a partial waterfront room (room only), three nights Winslow's Bungalows, Key West, in a queen room with breakfast, two nights at Grassy Flats, Marathon, in a pool/ocean view king room (room only). From £1,999 per person based on two sharing. Children can be added, prices vary depending on age. Visit *purelytravel.co.uk*.

1

PARATHAS

These flaky, buttery flatbreads are a favourite of mine. Go to Paranthe Wali Gali (flatbread lane), a narrow street in the Chandni Chowk. Either stuffed with vegetables or plain, they often come with chutney and pickles.

2

SPICES

Khari Baoli is Asia's largest spice market located in the old city. It's the wholesale end of the market and is known for its heady aromas and vibrant colours. Buy something to take home and cook with.

3

STREET-FOOD STAPLES

Full of childhood nostalgia, aloo tikki (potato cakes), samosas, bedmi poori (deep fried puffed bread made with urad dal), nagori halwa (crisp, crumbly pooris), and kachoris (stuffed fried pastries) hold a special place in my heart.

4

SWEETS

Swirly jalebi and creamy rabdi with nuts from the 17th-century market Chandni Chowk capture the charm of Mughal-era treats. Try kheer (rice pudding) from legendary Bade Mian Ki and fresh naan khatai from Chawri Bazaar.

what to eat in New Delhi

Vineet Bhatia MBE combines bold flavours and centuries of tradition at Dhilli at The Oberoi, New Delhi. Here, he lists his favourite dishes and where in the city to find them

5

KEBABS AND ROYAL DISHES

The roads around Jama Masjid are a hot spot for these historical dishes. Look for seekh and shami kebabs, nalli nihari (slow-cooked mutton), and rich shahi tukda (bread pudding with cardamom).

6

FRUIT KULFIS

Visit Kuremal Mohan Lal Kulfi Wale of Chawri Bazaar for these ice cream treats. There's an array of flavours from mango to guava, falsa (a sweet sour berry-sized fruit) and imli (tamarind).

7

SUFI FLAVOURS

Around white-domed Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah, the mausoleum of the Sufi saint Nizamuddin Auliya in the green leafy Nizamuddin West area, you'll find sheermal – a slightly sweet saffron-infused bread as well as halwa poori.

8

CHOLE BHATURE

Delhi's iconic comfort food comprises chana masala (chickpea curry) served with a bhatura or puri (breads). Available city-wide and popular for breakfast, try it when visiting the central market of Lajpat Nagar.

Photographs GETTY IMAGES

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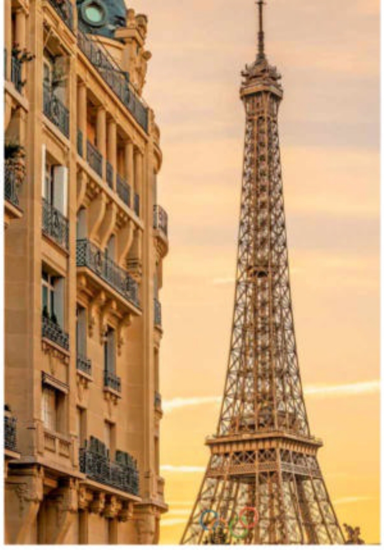

THREE OF THE BEST

European cities for food lovers

NEW!

Skip the airport queues with these easy-to-reach cities filled with culinary delights

words LULU GRIMES

It's a good time of year for a city break when the crowds are likely to be thinner and cool weather demands visits to bakeries, cosy lunches and dinners indoors. All these destinations are within easy reach, so in each case we suggest you take the train.

Amsterdam

The capital of the Netherlands has one of the best restaurant scenes in Europe and is easily reachable by train from the UK. A weekend break can be filled with visits to creative, modern restaurants, street food, and affordable tasting menus. For an outstanding dining experience, visit De Kas, in a converted greenhouse, and enjoy the daily changing menu based around produce from the restaurant's farm. Visit artisan bakery Louf for a coffee and a sourdough fennel raisin bun stuffed with Dutch cheese, and browse their bakery-themed book shop. Head to Foodhallen in a converted tramshed for snacks such as bitterballen with a modern twist, or oysters and beer. Esra is the latest opening from Selin Kiazim using local produce often with a Turkish spin; expect meze such as whipped feta crostini with candied pumpkin and slow roast lamb.

Stay: Conscious Hotels is a small chain of eco hotels with sustainability at its heart, from the water-saving showers to 100 per cent wind power. Triple rooms are available.

Get there: Eurostar to Amsterdam.

Paris

Whether you want a sublime pastry, a glass of wine in a cosy bar or a full gastronomic experience, Paris has it. The French Bastards is one of the best boulangerie brands, with incredible pastries, bread and hot chocolate – and they support local communities and use AOP butter and organic flour. Wine bar Déviant is the place for small plates, natural wines and a fun evening, but prepare to stand. Chez Paul has been executing classic dishes like steak and potato dauphinoise, and crème brulee for over 100 years – if you are looking for old school then this is it. At Clamato, expect seafood from French coastal waters including Dieppe whelks, Roscoff cockles and oysters from Quiberon as well as seasonal whole fish. It's walk-in, and open every day.

Stay: In a city full of hotels in stunning buildings, The Hoxton's Paris outpost still stands out. Two internal outdoor courtyards and a bar that's heaving with locals make this a popular spot. There are extra beds in some rooms, and dogs can be accommodated.

Get there: Eurostar to Paris.

Antwerp

Currently on the hot list for interesting and hyper-local cuisine. Seasonality reigns at deli-restaurant Marché Couverts, where the daily changing menu features dishes like chicory tarte tatin with comté. Find plant-based tasting menus and a relaxed but modern vibe at Camionette, or visit Camion from the same stable for an all-day menu of plant-based dishes. It wouldn't be Belgium without beer so make a trip to De Koninck brewery for tours and tastings, and find 'rock and roll' Butcher's Store, cheese shop and lunch bar Only Cheese, and nose-to-tail eating specialist The Butcher's Son among others in the same complex.

Stay: Hotel Pilar, on one of Zuid's most lively squares. Extra beds can be accommodated in the suite.

Get there: Eurostar via Brussels.

Photographs GETTY IMAGES/SYOLACAN/FANI KURTI/ELVAN UNLU

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Docked in the Netherlands' vibrant capital Amsterdam for two days, you'll have plenty of time to explore the peaceful canals by boat or bike and visit world-famous museums like the Rijksmuseum and Anne Frank's House.

In **Rotterdam**, visit Kinderdijk and its iconic windmills and indulge in local delicacies such as stroopwafels, bitterballen, and the celebrated cheeses gouda and edam. Admire Rembrandt and Van Gogh's masterpieces and tour the Royal Delft pottery factory to watch hand-painting techniques.

You'll sail on the beautiful Borealis, equipped with an all-season pool, spa, viewing observatory, and elegant lounges, bars and restaurants for an enriching journey.

What's included

- £75pp onboard spend
- All meals on board with a la carte breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as casual dining options
- Late night supper club and afternoon tea
- Self-service tea and coffee plus in-cabin dining and snacks
- Evening shows including live music and dancing
- Onboard activities including dance classes, lectures and talks, cookery demonstrations, games and quizzes

TS TOURS

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or for more information visit ***gf.tripsmiths.com/amsterdam***

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TERMS & CONDITIONS* From price is per person, based on two people sharing an interior cabin, subject to availability. Price and itinerary correct at time of print but may be subject to change. Deposit 20 per cent. Local charges such as tourist tax may apply. Travel insurance is not included and should be taken out at time of booking. Images used may not reflect your actual tour experience. This holiday may be sold through other selected brands. Tour is operated by and subject to the booking conditions of TS Travel Ltd and Fred. Olsen Cruises. **Good Food Show tickets: Good Food (published by Immediate Media Company London Limited) will contact you after your holiday to arrange tickets for your chosen show (excludes Saturday entry). Please see Good Food's privacy policy at *policies.immediate.co.uk/privacy* for details of how your personal information may be used to make these arrangements.

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Get the best from our recipes

We test them thoroughly to ensure they work for you

- Read the recipe before starting. Basic storecupboard ingredients, like salt, aren't included in the ingredients list.
- Use standard measuring spoons for accuracy, especially for things like spices, yeast and salt.
- Where possible, we use humanely reared and produced British meats, poultry and eggs, and sustainably sourced seafood.
- To avoid waste, we suggest how to use any leftovers you may have from our recipes.
- Eggs carrying the British Lion mark guarantee that all hens are vaccinated against salmonella.
- We try to avoid using plastic. You'll find instructions to wrap or cover, but we won't specify what to use unless it is vital to the recipe.

Helping you to eat well
Our BANT-registered nutritionist analyses our recipes on a per-serving basis, not including optional serving suggestions. You can compare these amounts with the Reference Intake (RI), the official recommended amount an adult should consume daily. Energy 2,000 kcals, Protein 50g, Carbohydrates 260g, Fat 70g, Saturates 20g, Sugar 90g, Salt 6g (RIs for total fat, saturates, sugar and salt are the maximum daily amounts). **Healthy** recipes are checked to ensure they have a low amount of saturated fat, sugar and salt per 100g, equivalent to green on a traffic-light label. On a per serving basis, Good Food require the saturated fat to be 5g or less, salt 1.5g or less and sugar, 15g or less per serving.

Low-fat recipes in Good Food are low per 100g, or 12g or less per serving. **Low-calorie** recipes have 500 calories or less per main, or 150 calories or less for a dessert. We also include portions of fruit and/or veg in a serving, and highlight recipes that supply a third of the daily requirements of calcium, iron, folate and vitamin C, and a good source of fibre and omega-3. **Balanced** recipes contribute to your five-a-day, include starchy carbohydrate, lean protein and dairy, or plant-based alternatives. These recipes also use unsaturated oils in small amounts, and all components of the meal are included in the analysis – only seasonings are excluded as 'to serve'. Saturated fats, sugar and salt are medium per 100g, or amber on a traffic-light label.

How we label our recipes
Vegetarian (V) or vegan recipes are clearly labelled, but be sure to check pack ingredients.
Freezing (❄) Can be frozen for up to three months unless otherwise stated. Defrost thoroughly and heat until piping hot.

- Recipes for advertisement features are checked by our cookery team but not tested by them.
- Our gluten-free recipes are free from gluten, but this may exclude serving suggestions. For more information, visit *coeliac.org.uk*.
- We are unable to answer individual medical or nutritional queries.

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Slice of nostalgia

Imagine rhubarb crumble and custard in a single slice of cake – a dreamy combination of textures and flavours

recipe AILSA BURT *photograph* CHRIS TERRY

Rhubarb & custard crumble cake

Custard powder is rippled through the cake batter, meaning you get the nostalgic taste of rhubarb and custard in every bite.

SERVES 10-12 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 1 hr 10 mins **EASY** V

- 125g butter, softened, plus extra for the tin
- 400g rhubarb, chopped into 1cm chunks
- 200g golden caster sugar
- 150g self-raising flour
- 50g quick cook polenta
- 3 tbsp custard powder
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 125ml soured cream
- icing sugar, for dusting
- double cream, to serve (optional)

For the crumble topping

- 100g golden caster sugar
- 60g plain flour
- 2 tbsp custard powder
- 1 tbsp quick cook polenta
- 50g butter, cubed

1 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Butter and line the base and sides of a 23cm round springform cake tin with baking parchment. Mix a third of the rhubarb with 1 tbsp of the sugar and set aside.

2 To make the crumble topping, mix the sugar, flour, custard powder and polenta together in a bowl. Add the butter and rub into the dry ingredients until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs, then set aside.

3 To make the sponge, mix the flour, polenta, custard powder, baking powder and 1/2 tsp salt in a bowl, then set aside. In a second bowl, beat the butter and remaining sugar until well combined, and lightened in colour slightly. Add the eggs one by one, beating well after each addition. Stir in the vanilla and soured cream, before folding in the flour mix and the remaining rhubarb that was not coated in sugar.

4 Spread the cake mixture in the prepared tin, then top with the sugar-covered rhubarb and scatter over the crumble topping. Bake for 1 hr-1 hr 10 mins until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for 15 mins, then carefully remove from the tin and leave to cool completely on a wire rack. Cut into slices to serve and dust with a little icing sugar, if you like. *Will keep in the fridge for up to three days.* Pour over double cream to serve, if you like.

PER SERVING (12)
338 kcals • fat 15g • saturates 9g • carbs 45g • sugars 26g • fibre 1g • protein 4g • salt 0.61g

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If you miss having the freedom to enjoy the foods and treats you love, you're not alone. Around 40% of Brits suffer at least one digestive symptom at any one time, from feeling bloated to long-term gastrointestinal issues.

But if you take care of your gut, it will take care of you – and far more than just your digestive health.

Our 'gut microbiome' – the trillions of friendly bacteria and microbes in our intestines – is key to digesting the food we eat, helping us to absorb essential vitamins and minerals.

Scientists have also discovered that it affects many broader aspects of our health, from the immune system to the brain, even our mood and mental health – adding up to a profound influence on our overall wellbeing and quality of life.

High stress levels, too little sleep, high-sugar and processed foods, antibiotics – can all damage our gut microbiome, and the effects are not always easy to talk about.

'I just couldn't eat a lot and I was very unhappy,' says 27-year-old Vicky Jaspal, a junior school teacher from Ipswich.

'I was tired all the time. I didn't really want to go out and eat with my friends or do anything, because I was limited in what I could eat.'

A relative suggested she try ProBio 8+, an advanced supplement designed to replenish the 'friendly' bacteria in the gut.

'I thought it would maybe help me to eat out occasionally, or I might be able to eat some things I couldn't currently.'

After two months, the change was profound: 'It worked wonders. It's just been amazing.'

'Now I've got more energy, I can go out a lot more and be happy – I don't really have to worry about what I have to eat.'

ProBio 8+ is a scientifically-tested, multi-strain biotic supplement designed with Probioact® Technology to establish and maintain a diverse colony of eight carefully selected bacteria including *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium*.

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'This results in an increased survival rate, allowing more friendly bacteria to multiply,' says Dr Miriam Ferrer PhD, head of product development at FutureYou Cambridge. 'This ensures a higher effectiveness for gut health compared with similar products.'

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